December 1988

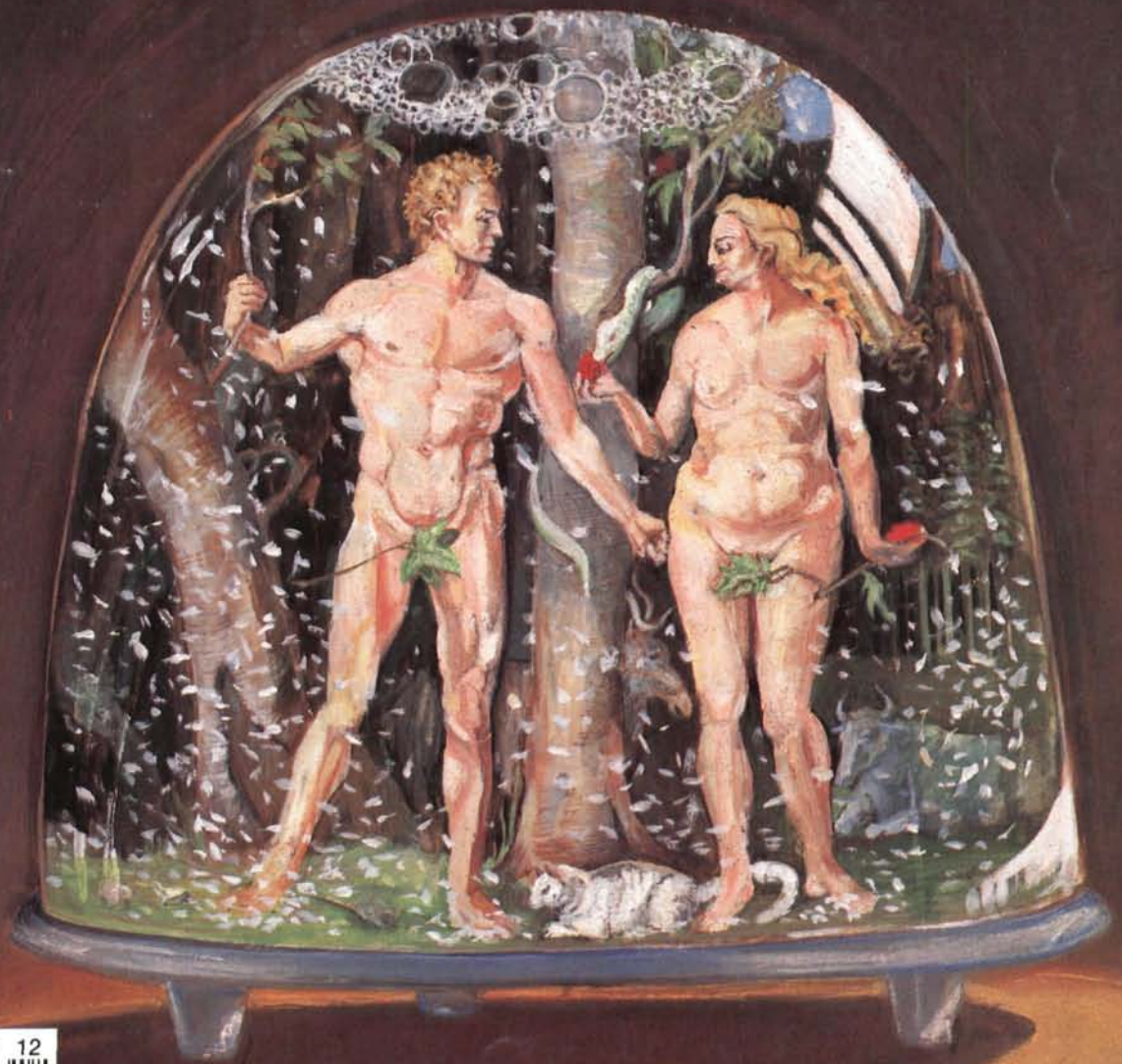
$2.00

chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

UTOPIA UNLIMITED

America's failed experiments in global democracy and drug prohibition.



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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 12, No. 12 December 1988

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Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.
U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.
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CHRONICLES (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $21 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Second-class postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *CHRONICLES*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors.

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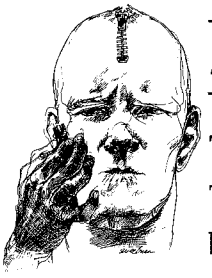

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Humanities in America, the National Endowment for the Humanities' latest report to the nation, is like one of those good news/bad news jokes that used to be so popular. The good news, according to NEH Director Lynne Cheney, is the mounting evidence for "the opportunities for learning and reflection that have burgeoned in our society in the past decade or so—and the enthusiastic response to them." Compared with earlier decades, Americans now spend more time on nonathletic cultural activities at museums, concerts, bookmobiles, and knitting exhibitions; 25 million people a year participate in events sponsored by the NEH; public television is purveying history and literature to the masses; and works by Toni Morrison and Allan Bloom are selling in the same stores that carry Harlequin romances.

The bad news is that all this juice and all this joy is going on outside of the sanctified halls of our universities. A student can still graduate from 80 percent of our institutions of higher learning without taking a Western Civ course, and the Stanford war on civilization may well be the harbinger of things to come.

Mrs. Cheney's report to the President, the Congress, and the American people is a welcome contribution to the national debate on higher education. If the intention was to score off the universities by praising local museums and private sector efforts in the humanities, her report can be acclaimed as a rhetorical success. As a serious piece of analysis, it is not without flaws.

First of all, it is not at all clear that people are better off buying highbrow books than by reading popular fiction. Sci-fi, mysteries, and even Harlequin romances deal with more serious questions than Philip Roth ever dreamed of taking up, and things must be getting bad if Toni Morrison and Allan Bloom are signs of hope. As for taking part in endowment-funded activities, God help a people that confuses such stuff with the humanities. Sure, many worthwhile projects are supported by the endowment, notably the publishing of historical papers, but the mixture of bureaucracy and the life of the mind is an evil brew better suited to fascism or communism than to democracy in America.

The humanities are badly off in the universities, and it is hard to find language sufficiently strong to describe what is taking place at Stanford. Still, more courses in the history of Western Civ may not be the answer. As recently as the 1960's, my classmates and I managed to get through a liberal arts program without ever hearing of such courses. We were too busy studying history, classics, and modern languages —which is what they really ought to be requiring of students, and I mean *all* students, at Stanford. (The best Greek student I knew was a chemistry major.)

Is there really any reason for hope? Public television has improved, it is true, but as a nation we waste more time than ever watching television, and even at the most popular level it is impossible not to smell the odor of decay. Compare the humor of W.C. Fields and Buster Keaton with the humor of, say, *Saturday Night Live* or Mel Brooks. What has happened to a nation's sense of humor when it is confined to the region of the body from the navel to the knees?

Spend an afternoon with your kids watching old Warner Bros. cartoons or the Three Stooges comedies. They were nearly the lowest sort of burlesque of the last generation, and yet consider what they took for granted. A viewer unfamiliar with opera and serious literature, for example, will miss the point of joke after joke. What would most college students do with Mo's "Sextet from Lucie" or Bugs Bunny's "Welcome to my shop, let me trim your mop" (to the tune of the *Barber*'s overture), or Elmer Fudd's "Kill the wabbit, kill the wabbit" set to the "Ride of the Valkyries," or, taking an example from television, with Kingfish Stevens' favorite poet, Edna St. Louis Missouri? If what we take for granted is an indication of the state of our civilization, the descent from the Three Stooges to the *Three Amigos* has been a freefall. (TF)

The Last Temptation of Christ—a genuine media event—was more interesting as a political issue than as a movie. The film portrays, it's true, a Christ who is much more man than God. Unappealing as He is in the beginning of the film, when He is building wooden crosses that fellow Jews will be crucified on, and running from God's will to make Him something other than a simple carpenter, Martin Scorsese's Christ is even less appealing when he starts to preach. Willem Dafoe's lisping Jesus is no debater; "Love your brother" is not the gist of his message, it's the entire message, beginning to end, with maybe a familiar parable thrown in for spice. There are far better lines and a good deal more plain old box-officeable drama in the original Book.

Critics of this portrayal of Christ have pointed out that other, holier cows—like Martin Luther King, Jr., for example—would never get such treatment. They are probably right. Imagine a movie about King that emphasized conferences with Communist Jack O'Dell and various nights out with women other than Coretta. But some protesters have unquestionably gone too far. Accusations that the Jewish studio executives at MCA hold some special responsibility for *The Last Temptation* are worse than ugly. Boycott the movie, warn your friends

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or parishioners to stay away, complain to the press that this is no way to portray Christ, but thank heaven that (as Clint Eastwood told some reporters) it's a free country, and that Martin Scorsese is free to make a bad and boring movie.

Be aware, too, that *The Last Temptation* would have died in release if certain Christians had not made such a fuss about it—which is not to say they should have remained silent. Whether or not this is Scorsese's "way of worshiping," to most Christians it will certainly seem blasphemous. But to me what is most blasphemous about *The Last Temptation* is not Jesus' much-ballyhooed fantasy of conjugal life with Mary Magdalene, but the intimation that if Jesus had somehow been saved from the cross, Saul of Tarsus, later Paul, would have founded a religion on him anyway. In the dream sequence Paul tells Jesus that people need the happiness their belief in Christ brings them, so much so that it is of no importance whether or not Christ actually died and was resurrected. What is lust compared to *that*? (KD)

Millions of fathers now face tougher enforcement of child-support laws. Prodded by a 1984 federal law which threatened states with partial loss of federal public-assistance funding if they did not do a better job of collecting child support, state officials have started to press delinquent fathers more rigorously. Arrests for nonpayment—sometimes with handcuffs—are climbing. Such efforts are paying off: state officials now collect more than $3 billion nationwide in child support each year.

Even stiffer measures are in the works. This past June Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan won overwhelming Senate approval (93 to 3) for a welfare reform bill that mandates more aggressive strategies for establishing paternity, for locating absent fathers, and for collecting child support. These provisions are intended to apply to never-married as well as divorced fathers. "Paying child support must be the norm," believes Senator Moynihan.

For their advocates, such measures represent justice, pure and simple. Yet a closer look raises serious doubts, especially in light of the legal doctrines now governing abortion. In a famous 1976 case (*Planned Parenthood of Missouri* v. *Danforth*), the US Supreme Court ruled that a father has no right to prevent his wife from receiving an elective abortion, regardless of the "possibly deleterious" effect of such a unilateral decision on "the future of any marriage." In a spate of cases in Indiana, New York, and Utah, three fathers (two married, one not) just this year tried to win judicial recognition of a paternal right to prevent elective abortions. In one case, the woman involved sought an abortion because she wanted "to look nice in a bathing suit."

The paternal passions in all of these cases are expressed in the words of David Ostreicher, a New York orthodontist who bitterly resents his wife's complete freedom to obtain an abortion: "It's a case of an outrageous act that a wife did against a husband. Without my knowledge, without my consent, she took our baby and ripped it out of her." Although two of the cases are still in the courts, all of the women involved received abortions.

Such cases strike at the very assumptions invoked to justify the collection of paternal child support. Traditional legal commentators have explicitly affirmed that a father's obligation to support his children stems from his decision to bring them into the world. As recently as 1968, the Supreme Court of Wisconsin traced a father's duty to support his child to "the voluntary status of parenthood which the father assumed."

A shadow of uncertainty falls on these legal arguments once the father becomes responsible only for pregnancy, while the decision to bear the child is strictly a woman's choice. In their rediscovery of the economic obligations of paternity, government leaders have generally sidestepped the abortion issue. But the right to abortion is central to the legislative logic of the new measures. Karen DeCrow, a leader of the National Organization for Women, acknowledges that "right now the law is definitely unequal; men have no stake in the say of what's going to happen." Although she opposes giving a father veto power over abortion, she admits "you can't have a unilateral decision in the hands of the woman and then say he's got to pay [child support]." As e.e. cummings put it: "You pays your money and you doesn't take your choice. Ain't freedom grand?" —*Bryce J. Christensen and George S. Swan*

Humanae Vitae, the papal encyclical on what are now known as "life issues," was issued by Pope Paul VI in 1968. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the controversial statement, the Roman Academic Center Foundation, in conjunction with the Roman Catholic chaplaincy at Princeton, held a symposium this past August. Over 100 scholars, philosophers, activists, and journalists gathered to discuss the prophetic significance of the liberal pontiff's surprise move to affirm the sanctity of life. The papers were wide-ranging, from theology to the techniques of artificial procreation.

In addition to noted scholars like Bruce Hafen, Jacqueline Kasun, and Allan Carlson, a number of distinguished clergymen, including Cardinal Gagnon, Bishop Myers of Peoria, and Bishop Vaughan of New York, made stirring presentations that reminded the audience of the good old days when the Catholic clergy were a powerful voice in the American conscience. Paul VI's warnings against the new technologies of procreation were nothing short of prophetic. We now live in a society in which it is routinely acceptable to induce dozens of pregnancies, by various bizarre techniques, with the expectation that only one will be allowed to result in a live birth. Abortionists are protected by law and, what is far worse, are tolerated in decent society. Indeed, the one jarring note at the Princeton symposium was the presence of former abortionist Bernard Nathanson. In all other respects, the symposium was a rousing success and augurs well for the future of the right-to-life coalition. (TF)

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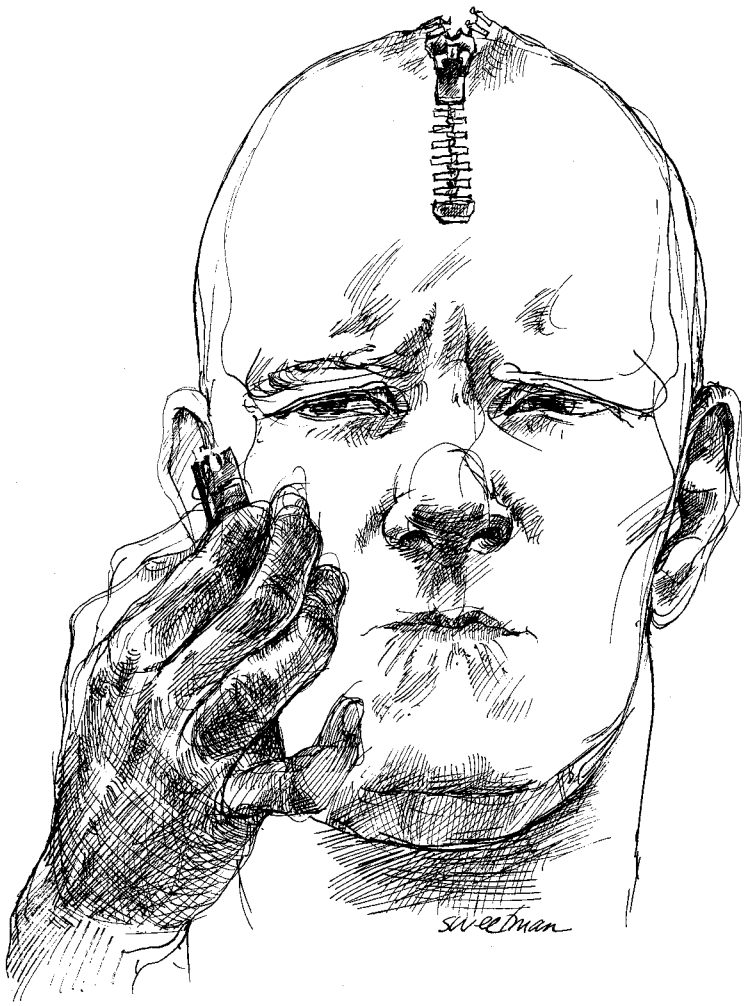
THE DANGEROUS MYTH OF HUMAN RIGHTS

by Thomas Fleming

Even if I had done all the things the prosecution says I did, I would still not be guilty of any crime, because I am fighting against colonialism. We have heard such arguments in recent years from a variety of sources: IRA bombers, African National Congress supporters (bishops and necklacers), and Marxist rebels all over the world. However, on this occasion, the warriors against colonialism were a group of Puerto Rican nationalists accused of robbery and murder.

The announcer on National Public Radio did not even have to swallow hard or clear his throat. For years NPR has regularly aired the claims of would-be rebels against the American empire: leaders of the American Indian Movement, college-kid Marxists out on a spree, incarcerated armed robbers who suddenly "discover" that they are political prisoners—anyone, in other words, brave enough to shoot an FBI agent from behind a tree.



Most conservatives and liberals alike are willing to debate the fine points of right and wrong in the specific cases of El Salvador, Northern Ireland, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan, but hardly anyone is willing to challenge the basic assumptions of the argument: that there is an international code of human rights which all nations are obliged (read: can be compelled) to live up to.

Human rights and democratic globalism were the trump card of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy. With it, the President took a propaganda trick or two from the Soviets; in Central America, however, it led to one problem after another as Assistant Secretary of State Abrams received his on-the-job training in *Realpolitik*. (The communists still run Nicaragua, and an increasingly anti-American Noriega remains the ruler of Panama.) The lofty rhetoric of human rights was used, under Presidents Carter and Reagan, as a pretext for deserting or even undermining three allies of the United States (the Shah of Iran, Somoza, and Marcos) and for pressuring virtually every friendly regime outside of Europe and North America: Chile, South Africa, South Korea, and Israel, to name only the most obvious. Any government that fails to live up to the professed ideals of Scarsdale or Brookline Young Democrats is put on notice: do as we say (but not as we do) or face the consequences.

Where would anyone get such zany ideas? Christians and Jews, of course, acknowledge certain standards of morality as the basis for social and political ethics, but the lawyers, activists, and criminals who make pronouncements on human rights are only occasionally men of religious conviction. Besides, it is entirely inappropriate—worse, it is ethnocentric—to expect Moslems, Hindus, and demon-worshipers to live up to the standards of Christian civilization, especially when some of these standards were discovered only in comparatively recent times and never applied, even in Sweden, with any consistency.

As John Randolph observed in 1806, when America was preparing for war with Britain because of her violations of our neutrality: "A great deal is said about the laws of nations. What is national law but national power guided by national interest?" What, indeed? So, I repeat, where would anyone

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get the idea that these sovereign United States were bound to respect some standard of political morality invented by professors of international law?

Consider the following flights of fancy, all of them asserting the dignity of international law:

> 1) "Genocide means . . . causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group. . . . Persons charged with genocide . . . shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction."
> 2) "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members in the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world."
> 3) " . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

The first of these fantasies is found in the Genocide Convention; the second is from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the third is, of course, from the first paragraph of the UN Charter. Taken together, these passages add up to an international commitment to an ideology of rights that confounds genocide with the mental anguish caused by ethnic jokes and virtually commits the signatories to something like the Equal Rights Amendment. Worse, these proclamations challenge the very idea of state sovereignty and could turn potentially vital areas of domestic policy and national interest over to the decidedly anti-American United Nations. It used to be argued that a system of international law could be built on the foundations of natural law, and I continue to believe in that possibility, but such a system would have to recognize a few facts of life, such as the inviolability of the family, the sovereignty of the nation state, and the historical/cultural roots of Anglo-American civil rights.

The most puzzling aspect of this human rights business is the fact that grown men—including the bureaucrats and politicians who seek high office—actually approved and signed these documents on behalf of the United States. It is as if a group of Mafia dons were to join an organization that rehabilitated drug addicts and redeemed fallen women.

Still better as an analogy: imagine the Soviet leadership embracing the language of humanitarianism. What could be more preposterous than a general secretary of the Communist Party proclaiming that the USSR is committed to "international cooperation on humanitarian problems, and these are not mere words. . . . Human rights is . . . one of the components of the all-embracing system of security." Those inspiring words, of course, were addressed by Mikhail Gorbachev to French President Francois Mitterrand in the summer of 1986. "A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds." Whether Mr. Gorbachev's promises will turn out to be as empty as Mr. Khrushchev's, it is simply too early to tell. *Glasnost* is, so far, little more than rhetoric.

For three decades US and Soviet leaders have been signing proclamations, accords, and protocols designed to guarantee rights of self-determination, religious freedom, and every other civil right which Britons and Americans shed their blood to secure. Even as they were signing the Helsinki agreement in 1975, the Soviets were at that very moment violating key provisions of that solemn assurance of "human rights and fundamental freedoms" in their oppression of religion, their suppression of a free press, and their treatment of minorities, to say nothing of the atrocities committed in Afghanistan.

In a very thoughtful and restrained contribution to the first issue of *Ethics and International Affairs* (published by the Carnegie Council), William Korey points out the difficulties of our situation: we sign agreements with the Soviets, who not only proceed to violate the letter and the spirit, but actually use the agreement to attack human rights violations in the US. The UN General Assembly now must listen to pious Soviet harangues on homelessness in America, our world-threatening commitment to SDI, our interventions in Central America.

The whole Helsinki process is a "hair-raising absurdity" according to Enoch Powell, who pointed out that "[t]he relationship of the Russian state to its subjects has remained unchanged . . . to try to shame or cajole or negotiate the Russian state into abandoning these convictions is like standing by the Volga inviting it to be so obliging as to flow north instead of south."

When has the Kremlin ever abided by an agreement on "human rights"? Do Hungary and Czechoslovakia have the right to self-determination? Or the Ukraine and Byelorussia, both of which are voting members of the UN? We had high hopes for the United Nations and even succeeded in organizing the Korean War under its banner (the Soviet delegation was absent when the vote was taken). But since Korea the tide has turned against the United States and its allies, and the United Nations has turned into a US-subsidized platform for Third World goons and Warsaw Pact thugs. So end the hopes and dreams of world peace that were cherished by so many decent, if unrealistic, Americans since the 1920's.

The terrible truth is that on this side of the moon there is no peace, no human rights. As Will Percy wrote in one of the most moving hymns of this century:

> The peace of God it is no peace
> but strife closed in the sod. . . .

The doctrine of human rights is a myth that has outlived its usefulness. Of course, man the political animal must live by political myths. From the very beginning he has buttressed his social systems with semireligious ideologies. His kings were children of the gods; his patricians had direct access to powerful divinities and could not marry with lesser folk; his modern governments have been based on the divine right of kings or on the divine right of the people.

Since the later Middle Ages, the people's right to make and unmake a government has rested on the very ancient idea of the social contract. In his primitive state man, so the story goes, had been free to do as he liked. Sensing the inconveniences of their situation, our distant ancestors wisely decided to sacrifice some of their freedom in return for the blessings of orderly government.

As a serious political theory, the social contract has been dead for centuries. Where do these rights come from? Is a

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state of nature even conceivable? Can our distant ancestors have bound us to any agreement they might have made? Can anyone imagine any circumstance under which any group of men would voluntarily and unanimously surrender their liberties? Recognizing the absurdity of the myth, the most prominent living natural rights philosopher reduces the story to a hypothetical "original position" in which all men and women are presumed equal. How our actions can be governed by a Harvard professor's hypothesis, John Rawls has never said.

For all its manifest absurdities, natural rights theory has, however, lived on in disguise. Marx played his one trick of standing theory on its head: government is *not* legitimate, because there was no contract, only a usurpation enacted by patriarchal capitalists. The utilitarians (and their libertarian descendants) simply chopped the contract into pieces before swallowing it whole: each individual enters into an engagement with society, but only so long as the cost-benefit ratio is favorable.

So long as the myth of natural rights cut against the power of government and in favor of the citizen, there were hardly any practical objections. The language of rights did not begin to lose its appeal until it was employed by Congress and the federal courts as a major weapon in their unremitting war against the family, private property, and local self-government.

Every right, it has always been understood, conveys an obligation, and in modern times that obligation implies the power of government. If homosexuals have rights, that means the federal courts can compel you to employ them, house them, and admit them into your once-private clubs. If children have rights, then state welfare agencies can monitor and regulate parents as they go about the difficult task of rearing their offspring.

If all peoples everywhere on the globe have inalienable rights, then it can only be up to the United Nations and to the International Court of Justice to decide who gets what. If colonialism is a "slavery-like" crime, as the UN has declared, then it really should be up to the International Court of Justice to decide the cases of Puerto Rican anticolonialists, black separatists, and Red Power activists. (It does no good to say that most Puerto Ricans, blacks, and Indians prefer their "slavery-like" condition, because slaves cannot be expected to know their own minds: they have been conditioned.)

There are political analysts in America, conservative as well as liberal, who believe South Africa must be pressured into changing its political system—this, despite Article 2, paragraph 7 of the UN Charter:

> Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state. . . .

The answer to that is provided by one of America's leading experts on international law, Richard Falk. Falk argues, in essence, that apartheid is inherently unstable and constitutes an open invitation to a civil war that will draw in the superpowers. As a threat to world peace, therefore, South Africa's domestic political system should be cleaned up by the UN.

For some liberals, that may be going a bit far, but writers like Falk and Leo Kuper (the author of *Genocide*) have other ideas that strike closer to home. The Vietnam War, for example, was genocidal; America's participation in the arms race is criminal madness; the US is riddled with anti-Semitism, racism, and intolerance. If South Africa is a candidate for takeover and reform, why not the United States?

The only answer we can make is that in our own self-interest the US reserves the right to veto any such nonsense in the Security Council and to refuse jurisdiction to the ICJ—as we did when Nicaragua accused us of mining her harbors in defiance of international law. If our goal in signing international agreements is to win propaganda victories against the other side, so blatant an exercise in hypocrisy does us no good. Of course, we do have the will and the power to defend our interest, but with "national power guided by national interest" we are back to the language of John Randolph.

The United States really needs to rethink its whole position in the international community. Even under President Reagan we signed (cynically, I hope) the Genocide Convention. What would we do if a President Dukakis or a President Simon decided to take it seriously? Would we, for example, turn over the Yonkers City Council to an international tribunal? It sounds ridiculous, but in the Massachusetts of Michael Dukakis, crimes involving ethnic prejudice fall into a special category. Throw a rock through a window, and pay a fine or hear a judge's lecture. Throw the same rock through an Asian's window and shout "Cambo," and you go to jail. If internationalists like Dukakis have their way, the jail may be in Cambodia.

Under a system of government like ours, we cannot afford to let one party sign an agreement that the other party may force the nation to live up to. Rhetorical nightmares have a way of coming true. Few American politicians took the UN rhetoric very seriously before the election of Jimmy Carter. Under his enlightened leadership, the US sacrificed, time after time, its national interest on the altar of human rights.

In the hostile world in which we find ourselves, the relative efficiency of the UN staff is of even less consequence than the UN diatribes against America. President Reagan's decision to release $188 million of withheld payments (with a promise of $520 million in the future) may be the predictable end-result of the internationalist rhetoric we have indulged in for decades. It may also be the fitting conclusion to a bipartisan coalition (in Congress and in the State Department) that signed the Genocide Convention and wagered the national security on the good faith of Mr. Gorbachev.

The Soviets, of course, know the score. In every international debate over human rights, they have managed to equate US unemployment with Soviet oppression, ethnic prejudice here with ethnic extermination over there. They succeed, because unlike us they are actually internationalists at heart; because there is one form of internationalism that always works. It is called empire; and no matter what smiling faces preside over the Kremlin, Moscow will never renounce its claim to be the Third Rome.

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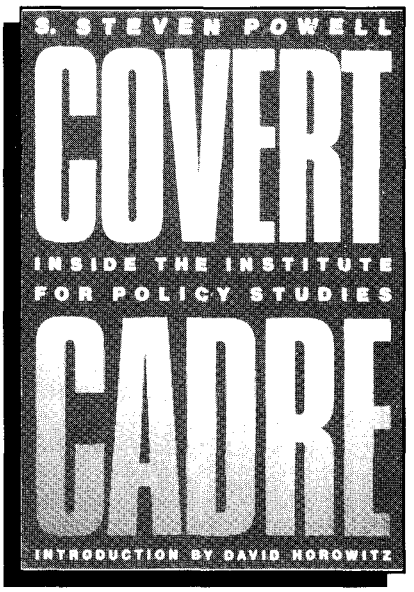

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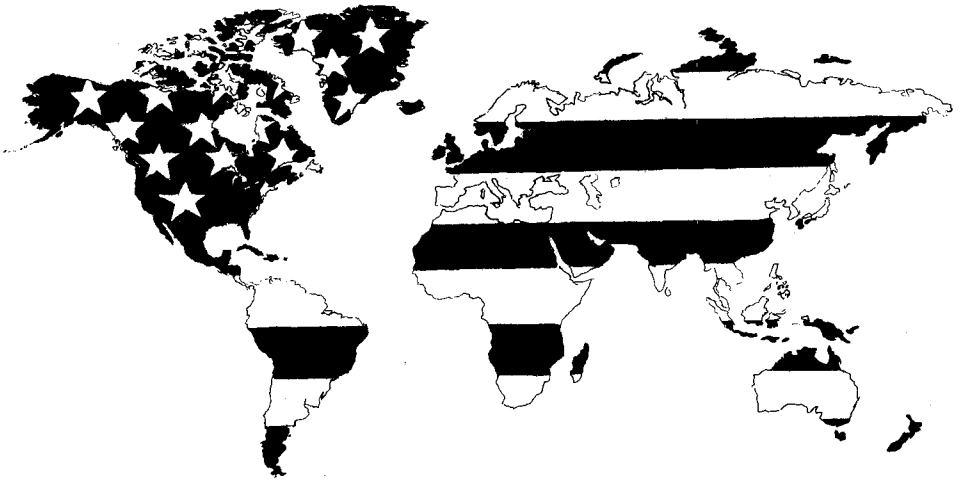
OUR STUMBLING GIANT *by Robert Nisbet*

Whatever the number of pluses in the portrait of Reagan that is beginning to take shape in the final months of his two-term presidency, there will be minuses also, and most of these will stem from his conduct of foreign policy and national defense. At first thought, this is almost bizarre. Wasn't Reagan the leader who from his first year in office had us walking tall in the world again, and that as the direct result of his firm hold upon foreign and defense strategies? He was indeed. But it is already apparent that there have been significantly more mishaps and acts of ineptitude in these areas than the image of walking tall can easily accommodate. Too often America the giant has been, in foreign areas, a stumbling, spastic, and ill-gaited giant.

Lebanon and the fate of 240 Marines, without arms, without instructions, and soon without lives, continues to haunt. So does the full story of our self-declared victory in Grenada—for which some 8,000 decorations were speedily pumped out—in which several thousand American troops required three days of bumbling before a couple of hundred armed Cubans were put down. There is the Reykjavik summit and its only narrowly avoided disaster of reckless utopianism. Reagan's rush to the INF treaty and its uprooting of precious nuclear missiles has created doubt in the one center in the world where no doubt should ever exist concerning the United States and its intentions: Western Europe, our oldest and generally most reliable allies.

General de Gaulle once spoke of America's "itch to intervene." History suggests he was right: take the Spanish-American War, the First World War, the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, and a train of lesser interventions since. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in a great power's occasional intervention in the kind of world that has grown out of the two world wars and their catastrophic effects on old balances of power. There is nothing wrong provided the intervention is clearly in our national interest and on behalf of American security, provided also we have the means of intervening successfully. The last means, at a minimum, necessary armed forces, and with these a technology and a leadership able to cope with such threats.

Each of these conditions may seem at first thought so elementary, so obvious, as to make mention gratuitous. Why else, it may be pityingly asked, would the US intervene except where our national interest, our citizens' lives and property abroad, have been clearly threatened? Secondly, can it be reasonably doubted that our military, given the infusion of around a trillion dollars during the years immediately following Reagan's election in 1980, together with the near-trillion already appropriated for spending during the next three years, is at last among, even on top of, the world's leading military powers? The answer to both questions is, unhappily, ambiguous at best. To the first the only possible answer based in fact is as negative as it is positive. Moralism, global democracy, our brothers' keeper, and making holy whatever America touches—all these crop



The foregoing is largely an adaptation of sections of Robert Nisbet's recent book, The Present Age: Progress and Anarchy in Modern America *(Harper & Row).*

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up too often in our ventures abroad. Sometimes moralism coexists with national interest, but the difference is nevertheless vast, and moralism often has an antithetical effect upon what is best for the US.

It is very much in the spirit of moralism that Congress makes diplomatic, economic, and psychological war on South Africa. We are unabashed by the fact that we were the last civilized nation to abolish slavery and held blacks afterward in a state of caste-segregation for a hundred years. We are undisturbed that by punishing South Africa, we punish a valuable ally, thus flouting our own national interest. This moralism is not even a general consensus; it is only, as is usually the case, the moralism of a minority—black leaders and students.

In Nicaragua, had Reagan presented solid evidence, the response would surely have been what it was when Soviet missiles were planted in Cuba. As it is most Americans are still dubious. In Reagan's Nicaragua all one can say is that if there was, and continues to be, an analogous Soviet threat, the Great Communicator has failed abysmally—mixing cries of "wolf" with Epworth League lectures on the dangers of Marxist-Leninist principles taking root in our hemisphere.

We should take comfort. If there is no true Soviet threat to us concealed in Nicaragua, if there is simply Marxism-Leninism, we are indeed fortunate. Such states and peoples generally fall into desuetude with wonderful alacrity. The whole world by now knows of the grim contrast between Communist states and the Pacific Rim capitalisms of Asia.

Moralism in foreign or domestic policy usually generates an altogether inappropriate evangelical zeal. The language of eternal absolutes, of vivid millennialist symbols, is soon invoked. T.R. declared once: "We stand at Armageddon and we battle for the Lord." I do not recall whether he was speaking about farm prices or the gold standard, but I believe it was only shortly after that the famous handbill was published in Chicago in which his opposition announced: "On Tuesday next at precisely 9:30 A.M. Theodore Roosevelt will walk on the waters of Lake Michigan." Humor is the most effective weapon against armies of True Believers.

But most moralism in domestic and foreign politics does not contain the spirit of charisma and pentecost. It reflects, rather, President Kennedy's celebrated promise "to pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship . . . to assure the success and survival of liberty." Arthur Schlesinger insists that only two months after saying this, Kennedy disavowed that orgiastic excess of moralism. Perhaps. But it was the Kennedy White House that created an American army of close to 20,000 in South Vietnam under the command of a four-star general, and that egregiously deposed Diem, thus making America inescapably our Vietnamese brothers' keeper—for six years and at heavy cost.

The roots of American moralism, and also exceptionalism, are deep in our history. The American religion that Tocqueville and Bryce identified was and is, to the extent that it still exists, a compound of Christian millennialism on the one hand, and complacent geopolitics (two broad oceans and a plethora of natural resources) on the other. The image of America the Redeemer Nation was a vivid one throughout the 19th century. It was deservedly a proud image. Think of the immigrants who, after settling down in this country, wrote everything from lapidary letters to the old country to significant autobiographies about the transfiguration of their lives in the American Garden. In this century, millions of Eastern Europeans and Asians have justifiably seen their experience as a modern Exodus.

But however touching and noble, the moral and spiritual do not necessarily translate into good public policy and law, or good foreign and defense programs. When, after repeated incidents, President Wilson asked and got from Congress a declaration of war against Germany, the sound reason to give was that already in the minds of most congressmen: the killing of American citizens and violation of their property rights on the open seas. But Woodrow Wilson was unable to live with so pragmatic and commonsensical a reason. He was already disgusted with England and France for their crass view of the war with Germany: that is was a matter of mere survival. It was with special eloquence, then, that he announced the purpose of the war was to make the world safe for democracy—American-style, naturally.

Wilson failed, of course, paralyzed. Vast must have been the floods of self-righteousness that coursed through that crippled body, first in the White House, then in the house on S Street. His posthumous reward was canonization by a large number of Americans. Throughout the 20's and 30's, Wilson was sanctified by ever-widening numbers of people, Republican as well as Democrat. It was Wilsonianism that saved Franklin D. Roosevelt from defeat in 1940; Wilsonianism and, of course, the useful Second World War. Roosevelt was in the direct Wilson tradition when he waded in gradually, first affirming neutrality, then declaring for quarantine, then discovering in January 1941 that the real objective of the war—whether Churchill and others fighting it knew this or not—was the global establishment of the Four Freedoms, and then months later wrapping the whole war, including Stalin's participation from June on, into the Atlantic Charter. It was not a very long step from the charter to the infamous Declaration on Liberated Europe composed at Yalta.

The moralistic urge in American foreign policy has remained strong throughout the four decades since Yalta. National interest and security were quite enough justification for Truman's agreement to give protection to Greece and Turkey in 1947. But it was probably foreordained that even the man from Missouri would clothe the action in words of cosmic righteousness. Kennedy's brief presidency was all moralism. There was the promise to go anywhere, bear any burden, the decision to rescue Cuba with a corporal's guard, and the fatal immersion in South Vietnamese politics.

Ronald Reagan, political child of the Democrats Wilson and FDR, has carried the banner of righteousness regularly during his two terms, never hesitating to gloss a Lebanon, a Grenada, or a Persian Gulf with the hues of eschatology. His fondness for the two kingdoms or cities suggests descent too from Zarathustra. These traits did not, however, prevent the feckless utopianism of the Reykjavik summit, and the decision to deprive Western Europeans of their utterly vital missiles.

Especially within this century, the American republic's moralism in foreign matters is linked if not anchored to

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moralism in domestic affairs. No Western country equals the US in the moralistic approach to human behavior: sex, liquor, gambling, reproduction, and now, life-threateningly, drugs, among others. Characteristically, we employ the verbiage of war in our domestic encounters with social problems. It's forever war: against poverty, illiteracy, environmental pollution, drugs, abortion. We invoked the sovereign state in our war against alcohol 70 years ago, and under the unlamented Eighteenth Amendment we became first among heavy-drinking peoples. Alcohol does indeed present a problem, but nothing like the problem that was presented in the 1920's by the noxious effluvia of Prohibition: gang wars and corruption threatening police and other civil departments, not to forget the coarsening of those at the bottom who, by the tens of millions, bought bootleg. Drugs are threatening a similar fate at the present time. Cocaine is without doubt a dangerous drug, as is alcohol; but it is unlikely that the substance is doing as much damage to America as are the social poisons which attend its distribution. Perhaps in a couple more decades we shall be able to look back on drug wars, drug terrorism, and the corruption of millions of Americans each year as we now look back on the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in Chicago.

With domestic moralism we march forth with one hand on the Bible, the other on a legal subpoena, invoking the already despotic national state. With foreign policy moralism, it is one hand on the Bible, the other on an ordering-up of the Marines. The results have not been pretty. President Carter ushered out his administration with Desert One in Iran; a more appalling instance of unguided bumbling in war would be hard to think of. But Reagan and his chiefs came close in Grenada, the follow-up report on which is still a tightly guarded secret in the Pentagon. It's probably just as well. From the unclassified information that came out, the story is grim enough, ranging from the inability to get interservice radio communication all the way to a Navy hospital ship's refusal to allow an Army helicopter filled with wounded to land on its helicopter deck. The Marines in Lebanon, sent there for the "presence" they could establish where Moslems and Christians intersected; a Navy destitute of minesweepers in the Persian Gulf and now with the *Stark* and the *Vincennes* on its naval conscience; each is a technological tribute to the immortal military acronym: KISS. Keep It Simple, Stupid. Awesome was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Crowley, in his bland insistence that there was no fault accruing to the Americans in the *Vincennes* disaster.

We boast about the $300 billion a year we put into national defense, and not improperly so. National defense is absolutely vital in this world. The dangerous Cold War of the past 40 years is by no means over. Whatever *glasnost* and *perestroika* may do for the problems of the civil bureaucracy, neither can or presumably will much affect the military bureaucracy. The real power in the Soviet Union since Stalin has been the military. That hasn't changed significantly, if at all, under Gorbachev.

Our relationship with Communist Russia will remain tense, something calling for incessant vigil. But it is important to keep in mind that the Soviet Union is a militarized, totalitarian national state; it is not well seen as a Vatican in charge of the morals and faith of proletariats of the world. That may be what Trotsky, Bukharin, and others had in mind, but the Moscow Trials and ensuing execution of millions put an end to any possibility of that becoming real. Back in the 1950's scores of groups in this country, all from the far right, argued that a seamless web connected the Kremlin with every manifestation of communism or socialism on the globe. The very real hostility between Yugoslavia and the Soviets, between Albania and the Soviets, should have prepared our minds for the split between Communist China and Communist Russia. The bitter hatred between the two empires goes back hundreds of years. But in many circles years were required before the reality of the deep chasm between China and Russia was accepted. There were even Americans who believed that *Doctor Zhivago* was a Kremlin plant arranged through agent Pasternak. The John Birch Society, or certainly its leader, Robert Welch, declared that Eisenhower was a willing front for the Communists, who were the actual governors of the United States. And so on.

We really can't afford that kind of lunacy during the rest of this century and into the next. Had Congress and the White House been filled with Robert Welches in the 1950's, the Soviet Union might have struck us with a corporal's guard, for American military power would surely have been fully occupied in sniffing out Marxist satanism at home, in England, in Sweden, in Tierra del Fuego—everywhere except in the Kremlin. Postmedieval Europe fought many of its political and economic troubles by the expedient of discovering and hanging or burning witches. We can't afford that kind of indulgence—which is in any event unconstitutional, thank heaven.

The Cold War is still very far from being a chimera. Stalin commenced that war at Teheran while the war with Germany was still in progress. We started to demobilize as completely as we had in 1919, but were saved from it by the very nakedness of Soviet gluttony in Europe. Only our exclusive possession of the atom bomb at that time prevented Stalin from ordering the Red Army into all Germany and France and the Low Countries. What else could have stopped him? We don't have the luxury of exclusive possession any longer, and it is unrealistic to think that anything, whether a thousand-ship navy or SDI, is ever going to restore that monopoly to us. What remains to us is first a foreign policy that doesn't go anywhere, pay any price, bear any burden, etc.; that doesn't punish, even destroy, natural allies by allowing some of our minorities' moral dudgeon over this or that unpleasantness in the ally to take over; and that contents itself with the constitutionally enjoined "common defense"—with unrelaxing attention to the Soviet Union, the only nation in the world at this hour that can conceivably present a threat to the US. Our second need, and it becomes more grievous all the time, is a military bureaucracy taken out of its gridlock. Desert One, Grenada, Lebanon, the Persian Gulf, Iran-contra, along with the shocking revelations about the Sergeant Yorks, the General Bradley troop carriers, the B-1 bomber, and the like, all attest to the fact that we are still crippled by a military seemingly resistant to mere outpourings of money. The warnings that Eisenhower voiced in his famous farewell are more pertinent today than they were then.

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ON LIBERTY AND THE GRAND IDEA

by Négovan Rajic

For a long time I thought I knew how to evade the discourse of the Grand Idea. It began when I was in the Yugoslav People's Army. The war was barely over, but victory brought no greater liberty to those who had suffered the Nazi occupation, and the brainwashing in the barracks grew more and more obsessive. I consoled myself that, once demobilized, I would no longer be forced to listen to this nonsense. In 1945, there were many of us in Yugoslavia (as in other Eastern European countries) who had realized what a chasm lay between the arguments we were hearing and the reality around us.

When I did return to civilian life, I quickly had to abandon hope there, too. Everyone around me bandied around the same depressing arguments so that any genuine thought naturally became subversive.

Youth, however, is incurably optimistic. I was 22 and clung to the hope of somehow avoiding the Grand Idea. After all, I had never been especially interested in politics or in the humanities, and by enrolling in the technical faculty I thought that as an engineer I would not have to endure these ideological arguments. I believed that, simply by the nature of things, the laws of physics would always remain exempt from this discourse. But I was wrong.

One April evening in 1946, after classes, as I was crossing the hall of the austere building that housed the technical faculty, a message on a poster stopped me in my tracks. The poster announced the inaugural lecture of a professor D.I., the title of whose talk was "Dialectical Materialism and Bohr's Atomic Theory." I suddenly understood: nothing and no one could escape the Grand Idea.

It was barely two months later, on July 8, 1946, that my lifelong friend Milenko and I swam the river that marks the frontier between Yugoslavia and Austria. As the sun rose behind the mountains the next morning, we set out along the road with our bundles. We had become pilgrims in search of liberty.

Upon arriving in the West, I believed that I had at last escaped the discourse of the Grand Idea. Unfortunately, I was once again to discover I had been mistaken. Sugared and diffused by its adaptation to the conditions of a free country, assuming the airs of a certain objectivity, the Grand Idea reigned supreme amongst the Parisian intelligentsia, the brave souls repeating its precepts like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. Its insidious character was highlighted by this milieu, where it was becoming more and more difficult to distinguish it from an authentically humanitarian debate.

By the end of the 40's, however, I had finally realized that it was pointless to try to escape, and that I was going to have to confront it with reason. It was Goethe who said that liberty must be won over and over again every day. Never did his words ring truer in my ears.

If ideology, in the modern sense of the term, is an invention of the 18th century, totalitarian ideology appeared only in the 19th, as a radically new phenomenon. Neither Ricardo nor Adam Smith ever suggested that an existing society should be swept aside to give way to a fundamentally new society. Why did Marx then want to begin with the total destruction of the existing order?

Perhaps it was because Marx, being an educated man, could not escape the influence of the sciences of his time. After the initial faltering steps taken by the exact sciences during the Century of Reason, the first half of the 19th century saw the establishment of science as an edifice with unquestionable, impervious foundations. (There remained much to be discovered in physics, chemistry, and biology, but at the time what was known seemed solidly defined, forever.) Thermodynamics, mechanics, electricity, and optics increasingly appeared to be the branches of a single physical science conforming to a few basic laws. Then, during the second half of the 19th century, Mendeleev's periodic table of the elements seemed to sweep away any distinction between chemistry and physics in favor of a unified, materialistic vision of the cosmos. The temptation to apply to society laws analogous to those observed in the exact sciences was considerable. To break down the tissue of humanity to its component elements, in order to erect a new structure of justice, seemed only logical to Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Pol Pot.

It seemed, also, that almost 2,000 years of Christian preaching had not brought us very far along the path of righteousness. Appealing for the voluntary conversion of man, Christianity had proved inefficient, whereas history has shown that man, left to himself, was prisoner of his passions and instincts. This was why it was necessary to create new social structures which would take man in hand and oblige him to accept the Good. After adhering to the Good for a

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certain length of time, custom would change the vile, imperfect brute into a New Man.

To bring into existence all these new structures, a new order of lay monks was to be founded, whose task would be to create the New Man—by knout, iron, and blood, if necessary. Only demiurges with steel nerves could belong to this order, obliged as they were to carry out the most thankless tasks today so that, tomorrow, humanity might be grateful.

Although discourse on the Grand Idea has been given up in all the countries where it became the religion of the state, it is still not quite dead in the West. This is because in the West it still deals with *some future time* and has not yet been subjected to the test of reality. The American, British, and Canadian intellectuals who dabble in it do so with the nostalgia proper to the end of an empire, for it has become the last wild dream of those who have seen their illusions torn too brutally from them.

From a purely logical point of view, socialist reasoning appears flawless. The ideas fit into a mental construct which we are forced to admire, although from an existential point of view the discourse of these Western Marxists leaves us essentially unsatisfied. It quickly becomes clear that while the discourse itself may be irreproachable, its basic premises are not. Its appeal consists precisely of dazzling its opponents by rigorous reasoning, which is nonetheless based on dubious maxims.

In Eastern European totalitarian countries, ideological discourse takes place within a very closed circuit, distinguished by three poles of attraction: the governing body, the great witch doctors of Marxist philosophy, and the ideological press. It is the rulers who start the ball rolling, usually only when pushed by the force of events. After this the professors of Marxism are required to adapt the ongoing praxis to the canons of the Grand Idea, while the journalists are given the job of making the whole thing comprehensible to the general public—as if the people had any real interest in the ideological orthodoxy of their rulers. Naturally, it is common knowledge in Eastern Europe that no one is really interested in ideological discourse, but we must not forget that totalitarian societies are fictional worlds where everything must be done *as if*—as if the people could really vote, as if power really devolved from them, and as if the judiciary were really able to render judgments independently—in short, maintaining the illusion of real life as known to memory, instinct, and common sense.

The almost total schism between the discourse of the rulers and the ruled may be admirably illustrated by a phenomenon both linguistic and sociopolitical. In the popular speech of Eastern Europe, the pronoun *They* serves to designate the leaders of the Communist Party. When a citizen of Romania, for example, says "*They* do what they want," there is no doubt in the mind of any other Romanian as to whom he means by *They*.

Curiously enough, this ideological white noise may give Western observers the impression of an intense exchange of ideas between the citizens and their government. To sustain the illusion of a living ideological discourse, the government is continually organizing meetings, discussions, and "spontaneous" demonstrations. The whole thing amounts to a sort of monumental avant-garde theater, where the public plays the role of a troupe of mimes while the producers take the part of spectators—confirming, in a way, Carl Sagan's words that "life exists for the cosmos to experience itself."

Ever since the October Revolution, the proponents of the totalitarian argument have had their eyes fixed firmly upon the US—to catch up with America and leave it behind is their dearest dream. They seem to be hoping that America's development will simply stop so that their own may draw even with it. Was it not Khrushchev who announced to the British ambassador in 1962 that Britain would soon be communist? And was not the Soviet Union supposed to attain communist utopia sometime during the 1970's, also according to Khrushchev? During the first oil crisis in 1973, was it not *Pravda* that announced the onset of the end of capitalism?

Although discourse on the Grand Idea has been given up in all the countries where it became the religion of the state, it is still not quite dead in the West.

To understand the power of the Marxist dream, we might try to imagine it in terms of Puvis de Chavannes' bucolic frescoes. Attracted to its rosy glow, we find names as celebrated as Romain Rolland or Irène and Frédéric Joliot-Curie, along with myriads of others. To understand what was to become of the discourse of the Grand Idea during the revolution, we must know that in the minds of its protagonists, the revolution corresponded to the creation of the world in the Old Testament: it was to be the birth of a new world out of chaos and the separation of good and evil out of a molten volcanic mass. The arguments which accompanied this upheaval were all-encompassing—grandiose, heroic, pathetic, generous to some and merciless to others, filled with folly and audacity. For those who created it, the revolution was a time charged with an extraordinary historical intensity, all the more for being history's last event.

With the seizure of power and under the pressures of reality, the discourse was to change considerably. Its new leaders, previously masters only of the polemic, found themselves confronted with the difficulties inherent in any state apparatus, especially the complex problems of economics. They realized at once how impossible it would be to make good on all the promises offered with such assurance earlier. From that moment on, they were to feel themselves threatened, afraid of the rage of the people. To guard against this danger, either real or imagined, the discourse of the Grand Idea was enriched with a whole panoply of "enemies of the people"—"speculators," "traffickers," "saboteurs," "bearers of false rumors" (which, most of the time, were perfectly true), and other subversive elements. Thus the infernal cycle began: the limitation and repression of liberty that was to swell the ranks of the malcontents, in Yugoslavia, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, of those disillusioned with the revolution which the authorities felt obliged to save by taking still more coercive measures against the "enemies of the people," and so on, indefinitely . . .

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We are now witnessing the last phase of the Eastern European totalitarian state, with the governing bodies in Poland, Hungary, or Yugoslavia no longer demanding of the governed to believe in the discourse of the Grand Idea, but simply to maintain the pretense of doing so. Faced with a double image of the world and impelled by instinct for self-preservation, the man of "real socialism" creates econd image of himself as well, so he can go on living *as if* . . .

Strangely enough, there was initially some truth in the discourse of the Grand Idea, when it promised to release the creative forces of literature, the sciences, and the fine arts. But their liberation was short-lived: after a brief period of euphoria, the creative forces themselves soon began to appear as a threat to the New Order all over Eastern Europe.

The Bolshevik Revolution illustrates this process clearly. Chagall, Kandinsky, Malevich, Soutine, Mayakovsky, Mandelstam, and many others now forgotten fled to the West, committed suicide, or vanished in the Gulag. And how many other unknowns were simply swallowed by the maw of the revolution? How many lives and promises were wrecked? How many pictures were never painted, how many books never written because the revolution was afraid? And what was the revolution afraid of? Of counterrevolutionaries? Bomb-throwers? No, it was afraid of men who painted pictures or wrote poems, of thinkers and composers. These were the very men, moreover, who had prepared the way for it, and who later welcomed it as the time of "sunrise promises."

The change which occurred in the discourse of the Grand Idea after the seizure of power all over the world may well be described as fraudulent substitution. In the New Society, it became more and more embarrassing to speak of justice and humanity, for the New Class was setting up its own privileges quite openly and shamelessly. The existence of concentration camps has been no secret to anyone in Russia ever since the 1920's. This is why the Soviet revolutionary discourse has had to return incessantly to the time of the October "Revolution" and its deified founding father. What Soviet communism is doing, more or less, is taking refuge in the period of fictional purity and real hope. Unable to discuss the ideals in whose name the revolution was launched, the Soviets exalt a revolutionary moral code whose essence can no longer be explained. From being a means of building a new society, the revolution has been transmuted into its own *raison d'être*, while its discourse on a more just and humane society has been relegated to the props department. This switching of categories has culminated in the first narcissistic revolution in history.

In 1931, posters in Moscow declared *Already We Are Living Better*, while at the same time in the Ukraine, which had once been the granary of Europe, a horrific, party-induced and -administered famine was killing millions of people.

The new masters of Russia believed they could fashion reality as they chose, simply by seizing control of all means of communication and establishing a monopoly over the spoken and written word. In doing so, they committed the original sin of every totalitarian society—the suppression of dissent.

For only dissent permits us to see ourselves. Dissent is the other whom we see in the mirror, the other who, like a counter-discourse, is the only means of making our own discourse credible. In suppressing that, the discourse of the Grand Idea condemned itself to solitude—and to solitary stupidity.

Insistence is always a sign of stupidity, says Camus. And within that solitude, anything is possible. You can make your horse a senator or you can vote, unanimously, for a law proclaiming the memory of Comrade Stalin to be eternal (as did the Chamber of Representatives of the Hungarian People in 1953). Strangely enough, those who thought they could appropriate to themselves, in its entirety, the language of ideology, are now reduced to what Russians call wooden speech.

Up to a certain point, the fate of words is like the fate of men, for words are also born, and live. Men, however, are mortal, while words, like the phoenix, constantly arise from their own ashes. Ceaseless examination of meaning is to words what air is to humans. Without this questioning, meaning fades away. And when words are imprisoned in stultifying discourses, they revolt and start signifying the opposite of what has been imposed upon them. This is the point at which tyrants begin to tremble.

There is not much talk of liberty in the East, just as there is not much talk of rope in the house of someone who has hanged himself. Yet still *They* manage to denigrate it at every opportunity—a thing that unfortunately happens here in the West, too. In the East, however, *They* denigrate liberty because *They* cannot offer it, whereas here we have more of it than we know how to manage. To hear its foppish detractors talk, we might think that now, at the end of the century, liberty has become a luxury. *They* claim it represents nothing but the freedom to starve and *They* assert that everyone prefers to enjoy the certainty of filling his belly every day. To the poor *They* offer the exchange of their liberty for some soup and a bed, but woe betide those who

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

All Booked Up

"Any simpleminded economist could explain the relationship between censorship and patronage. Imagine a society that has, say, only a billion dollars to spend on the written word. If the powers that be decide that 950 million will be spent on Barbara Cartland novels and copies of *The New Republic*, the chances of success for a serious novel or an open-minded magazine are somewhat reduced. Of course in a free market economy such a scenario would be ridiculous, but we do not live in a free market economy. Literature is controlled by monopolies and cartels that are about as open to to competition as the postal system: Northeastern publishers, book agents, reviewers, foundations, government agencies, and the vast network of libraries and universities, private as well as public."

—From "Kazin and Caligula" by Thomas Fleming

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accept the swap; they will find their soup watery and their beds hard. The scoffers also claim that liberty is a mere formality in the West, and authentic only in the East. If you believe *Them*, then people here are slaves who imagine themselves to be free, while people there are free and believe themselves to be slaves.

There is a certain kind of philosopher who seeks truth in books and racks his brains for abstract definitions of liberty, absolutely useless to the men in Kolyma. The kind of liberty dreamed of by Varlam Chalamov and his *zek* companions will always be truer than any erudite definition. For me, liberty has never been an abstraction, for there have been moments when I felt I could touch it, as a blind man caresses the face of a loved one.

I felt that most sharply on July 8, 1946, on the evening of a beautiful summer day. After weeks of preparation, Milenko and I had finally arrived at the Austrian-Yugoslav border. Before us flowed the Mura River, running cold, high, and fast. On the Austrian bank, a forest of stunted trees concealed an unknown world, almost within our reach. At our feet the river twisted past in long, muddy coils, but we had no time for reflection. We threw ourselves into the water and for an eternity struggled against the current, which kept forcing us back towards the Yugoslav bank. Just when I was beginning to think that the river was to be our grave, it took pity on us and cast us into a cove. Before setting out through the stunted forest, we took one last look at the green hills of our native land. We crossed the forest and reached a village whose people came out and stared at us in silence, with good reason. I wore a soaking wet suit and Milenko had no pants at all, the river having kept them as the price of our passage.

We spent our first night of freedom in a barn open to the north wind. In the farmyard below us, we could see strange half-timbered buildings, which reminded me of the paintings of the Flemish masters. Ursa Minor shone from a cloudless sky with the polestar at its far end. Our future could not have been murkier. We had neither money nor friends nor proper papers, and yet, the memory of that first night has remained one of joy and serenity. Several times I awoke and, remembering that Yugoslav police could no longer reach me, went back to sleep, my soul at peace.

The following morning, just as the sun was rising behind the mountains, we set out with our bundles. This was the beginning of our pilgrimage to that imaginary sanctuary called Liberty.

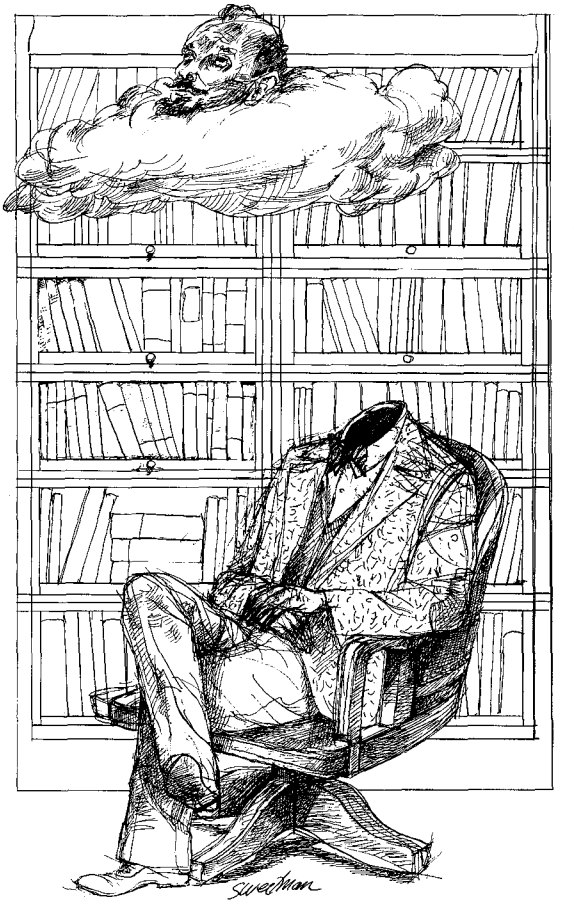
WHAT AILS THE HISTORICAL PROFESSION? *by Paul Gottfried*

Academic historians are too uncritically receptive to utopian thinking. Too many believe in what Karl Mannheim described as the striving for a new world order, an order which "would shatter all existing reality."

This utopianism should not be identified too closely with historical materialism—or with Marxism, which claims to rest on a materialist foundation. Academic utopians may invoke Marx, but materialism is not the source of their dreams.

However, it was Marx and his disciples who wedded historical materialism to revolutionary ideology. Furthermore, Marxists obscure historical facts—for example, the brutal imperialism and mass murder practiced by the Soviets—to uphold the reputation of self-proclaimed Marxist governments. Marxist historians have ritualistically exaggerated the evils of the American capitalist economy, and some have manufactured slave revolts in the antebellum South when the party line required it.

There are exceptions. A self-declared Marxist, Eugene Genovese, has produced ground-breaking scholarship on the Southern slave economy. Another Marxist, Christopher Hill, has done monumental work on the puritan revolution, including a magisterial study of Oliver Cromwell. Marx himself wrote with insight as well as passion about the 1848 French revolution. Surveying the changes that had occurred in France since the great revolution in 1789, Marx observed



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that a centralized bureaucratic state had grown in size while competing sectors of the *haute bourgeoisie* struggled for social dominance. His descriptions of the *état centralisateur* parallel those of Alexis de Tocqueville.

Generally, great histories that combine literary excellence and tragic sensitivity with extensive research are less likely to come out of academic history departments than from men of letters. I'm thinking, for example, of the popular histories of the Civil War by Bruce Catton and Shelby Foote. The reason is not simply the obvious one, that most academic historians write badly. More to the point is that academic historians, with some exceptions, lack historical vision. What they produce is not drama, but clumsy, unintended *comedy* in the sense in which Northrop Frye defines it: as an "upward movement . . . from threatening complication to a happy ending." Today's academic historians present the past and the present as preludes to a socially-reconstructed future.

Their animus against the United States and its commercial republican past makes sense only if we explore this futuristic fantasy. In a recent and exhaustive investigation of social studies textbooks, the NYU psychology professor Paul C. Vitz has found that textbook writers repeatedly reconstruct the past in order to teach ideologically appropriate lessons. Women, Native Americans, Hispanics, and blacks are assigned importance in critical events and movements out of proportion to their actual accomplishments. Religion — more specifically, the Judeo-Christian heritage — is either blamed for perceived injustices or else given short shrift even in discussions of the Middle Ages or colonial New England.

Vitz contends that militant secularism and a rejection of traditional sex roles are characteristic of those multitudinous textbooks, written or updated since the 70's, that he includes in his study. Other critics of recent historiographical trends complain about the persistent anti-Americanism and implicit sympathy for Stalinist Russia in recent accounts of the Cold War. Such revisionist history is becoming orthodoxy. The *American Historical Review* published hysterical and irrelevant responses to Robert Maddox's *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* (Princeton, 1973). Maddox, a Kennedy-Johnson Democrat, examined the sources closely and concluded that Gabriel Kolko, Gar Alperovitz, and other Cold War revisionists had invented historical incidents and doctored incriminating texts. Maddox's detractors, who were the only respondents the *AHR* printed, never got beyond name-calling and accusations of "neo-McCarthyism."

History has been turned into propaganda for a new social agenda. Industrialists and other members of the ruling class are seen as reprobates; those who struggle — or can be made to appear to struggle — on behalf of approved minorities are the designated elect. This method of separating the goats and the sheep can be found in monographs, dissertations, and in social studies textbooks now in use in our schools. The model against which academic historians judge the Western past and, to some extent, the present, defies even common sense. It is unisex, collectivist, secularist, and pacifist — unless faced by the moral duty to overthrow reactionary governments.

Because all known societies that have left written records fall short of the paradigm, academic histories have tried to locate their impossible dream elsewhere. Some even resurrect and refurbish Lewis Morgan's and Friedrich Engels' claim (borrowed from the ultraconservative historian Karl von Bachofen) that primitive nomadic society was matriarchal.

A recent attempt to do this (which *Kirkus Reviews* celebrates in superlatives) is Gerda Lerner's *Women and History, Volume 1: The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford, 1986). Lerner's only concession to the problem of proving the existence of a primitive matriarchy is to claim to find an equally problematic but today more fashionable equarchy in the pre-Mesopotamian world. According to Lerner, it is possible to infer, from the fact that early Mesopotamians worshiped goddesses before gods, that women had held a higher social position before the rise of military monarchies. Though it is possible (and from Lerner's point of view desirable) to believe this, there is no good reason why one should. Lerner's premise is no more provable now than at the time Bachofen first proposed it in the 1830's. (It is ironic that Bachofen put forth his theory of *Mutterrecht* not to validate feminism, but to contrast the primitive and crude character of matriarchal society and religion to the later, happier development of Christian patriarchy.) Despite the fact that Lerner was entirely unqualified to undertake such a study — she knew none of the languages — her book has been very generally praised. (However, a few responsible feminists, such as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, have spoken out.)

Lerner, like other feminist historians who follow selectively in Bachofen's tracks, commits what Michael Levin has referred to as the "Jack and the beanstalk" fallacy. Like someone who unjustifiably infers the existence of Jack and a giant whenever he encounters a beanstalk, Lerner and other feminists who need proof for an unprovable dream assume that female power must have accompanied female gods. A similar association was made for a while between matrilinear succession and matriarchy, until evidence in this case overwhelmed the will to believe. (Male dominance is quite secure in societies that trace inheritance from mother's brother to nephew.)

Looking for paradise closer to our time, Robert McElvaine in *The Great Depression: America 1929-1934* praises the New Deal for the "feminization" of American society. Turning their backs temporarily on a masculine and amoral capitalist culture, Americans of the mid-30's lived in "a time in which the values of compassion, sharing and social justice became the most dominant that they have ever been in American history." McElvaine's New Deal was not simply about reining in big business or redistributing wealth. By striking against the spirit of capitalist enterprise, it worked to advance the goal of a feminist America.

Men — at least men per se — are not the only targets of attack. The animadversion by Michael Rosenthal, a dean at Columbia College, that if "you look at our curriculum, it is probably fair to say that it is massively Euro-centered white male," reveals more than fashionable self-hatred. Rosenthal is obviously affected by nostalgia for alien cultures viewed as free of the burden of Western (and perhaps all human) history. It is this kind of nostalgia which the English Communist Eric Hobsbawm criticizes as the persistent hunger among some intellectuals for "revolutionary

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exotica." In the early 70's Hobsbawm noted that academic radicals admired communist societies in proportion to their geographical or cultural distance from the Western experience.

A point sometimes heard is that historians used to try for objectivity but no longer do. Though this may be true, there are deeper problems with the current academic historiography. It is tiresome and—to use a still applicable Victorian word—unedifying, because it lacks tragic vision or even gratitude to the civilization that produced it.

This is history lacking, if you will, a sense of history, a sense of belonging to an unfolding civilization. Foreshadowed by Edmund Burke and the early Romantics, this developmental concept fused the notion of history as process with a deep appreciation of the past. Even so thoroughgoing a historical progressive as Hegel denounced political changes aimed at remaking society. A sound constitution, said Hegel, was never "a mere contrivance," but was the "work of generations."

Contemporary historiography lacks all reverence for the past. It is guided by a suspicion that treats inherited institutions as mere obstacles to the fulfillment of an imaginary and ahistorical human nature. The past is seen as concealing and distorting instead of revealing our true humanity. It is there to be condemned—or else reshaped in order to arouse and sustain revolutionary consciousness. Mankind, as seen from this perspective, is on the march toward a scientifically-designed millennium that might have been reached earlier but for the machinations of business tycoons, religious evangelists, the American State Department, and anticommunist generals.

This view cannot produce epic historiography. Nor is it capable, in my opinion, of engendering even minimally interesting reading. Academic historians too often have cardboard heroes and stock villains that even a literary genius could not bring to life. For such historians there is nothing insoluble, nothing requiring moral limits, and thus, like Aeschylus' Agamemnon, they become "unbearable to the crafty child of Ate" by perpetually overreaching. The nemesis of this overreaching in the modern case is not a fall, but silliness aping dramatic gravity.

A work that purports to deal with a tragic aspect of recent history, William Appleman Williams's *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, illustrates my brief. The book is an extended condemnation of American corporate capitalism, which Williams blames for Third World underdevelopment, the Cold War, and the thwarting of socialist revolution. Certainly it is easy to see why it appeals to Cold War revisionists and academic critics of American capitalism, though it is also a book that contains the untragic flaw of never documenting its central thesis. Williams contends that America's overriding foreign policy goal during the Second World War, which it tried to press on the Russians at the Potsdam Conference, was keeping Central and Eastern Europe open to American capitalist control. As Robert Maddox and others have shown convincingly, not a shred of evidence, save for Williams's questionable inferential judgments, exists for this argument. But more importantly, Williams—on other occasions an insightful leftist—misunderstands the nature of his own purported theme: tragedy. Williams speaks not of fated suffering, but only of economic forces that appeal to him and others that do not.

By contrast, the tragic imagination, which has produced our best historical and literary drama, grasps what is inherently awful in the human condition. Man is born fatally flawed: "evil from his youth," as Genesis explains, or "with rash pride begetting an even more disastrous boldness," in the words of Aeschylus. Yet if man is born to suffer, this inescapable unhappiness befalls the noble as well as the base. Hector and his kinsmen suffer together with their brother after Paris has betrayed the hospitality of the king of Sparta. In no sense does Hector abet Paris in seducing Helen, yet he too must pay the price of an outrageous act, which he does by dying heroically. The suffering of Oedipus and his children, say the Greek tragedians, is retribution for the misdeeds of the descendants of Cadmus. In the opening lines of Sophocles' *Antigone*, the protagonist tells her sister that a fratricidal war has just claimed their two brothers; this was Zeus' punishment for the evils of their father, Oedipus. Though the suffering is divinely destined and in some sense deserved, we are meant to mourn the fall of Oedipus and the anguish he causes to his children. We are also meant to feel sympathy for Oedipus' daughter, Antigone, who upholds the "law that is everywhere in force" when she buries her rebellious brother, fallen in battle against his native city. Antigone, though acting against the orders of her tyrannical uncle, exemplifies familial piety, and suffers for it. Sophocles' insistence, as expressed by the chorus, that "there is no release for mortals from allotted suffering," means that misery is our common destiny.

History has been turned into propaganda for a new social agenda. Industrialists and other members of the ruling class are seen as reprobates; those who struggle—or can be made to appear to struggle—on behalf of approved minorities are the designated elect.

Francis Cornford argues convincingly that the universe of Greek tragedy provides the ethical and metaphysical context of Thucydides' great work on the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides, no less than Aeschylus and Sophocles, saw pride and temptation interacting with inexorable necessity in human affairs. He calls our attention to heroic acts as well as folly in a war that he deplored (for he knew it would destroy all Greeks).

Cornford points to an understanding of tragedy that was present in ancient Greek schoolchildren—and, I would add, among those who read popular histories of the American Civil War. Lincoln and Lee, no less than Pericles and the Spartan allies, did their duty as they saw it. Lincoln himself reflected on the fact that the North and the South invoked the same Deity in a struggle in which each side claimed to be worthy of divine favor. Speaking at Washington and Lee University in 1907, Charles Francis Adams Jr., son of the Union's most brilliant statesman, eulogized Robert E. Lee on the centenary of his birthday. Though his father and Lee had been on opposite sides in the war, Adams believed that both had followed their consciences faithfully: "Every man in the eleven states seceding from the

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Union had to decide for himself whether to adhere to his state or to his Nation; and I finally assert that whichever way he decided, if only he decided honestly, putting self-interest behind him, he decided right."

In another expression of the tragic sense, Winston Churchill, in his closing volume on the Second World War, remarks that the cost of ridding Europe of one tyrant was delivering half of the same continent to another. In summing up his theme, Churchill stated that he intended to discuss "how the Great Democracies triumphed and so were able to resume their follies which so nearly cost them their life."

When tragic history is related to a lost civilization, it celebrates a vanished splendor, while examining the reasons for its loss. Churchill, for example, looked back fondly at the liberal middle-class society of 19th-century Europe, while recording the assaults on it by global wars and radical ideologies. Henry Adams wrote about the American Republic's founding generation as the representative of a silver age reviewing the achievements of a golden one. A similar nostalgia pervades the introduction of Edward Gibbon's magisterial *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon made no secret of his respect for the Roman Empire at its height under Trajan, and he devoted his *magnum opus* to discussing the long tortuous descent of the Western Empire and its Byzantine successor down to the sack of Constantinople in 1453.

I would contrast this attitude with the one found in Carl N. Degler's exhaustive study of women's history, *At Odds*, published in 1980. I cite this work because of its author's scholarship and his reputation as a moderate leftist who tries hard not to tip his hand. After surveying all the achievements of the feminist movement in postwar America, Degler observes without much apparent concern that there now exists "a tension between the family and individual interests of women. Women find realization of themselves as persons impossible to achieve within family situations." (One might ask which women Degler is referring to. According to Gallup and other polls, well over 80 percent of American women seem to consider their families their primary area of interest.)

Despite such "tensions," Degler reassures us that "obviously how any individual woman perceives her future is up to her. The family, after all, is at bottom nothing more than a relation between a man and a woman and their offspring." In most families, there are still other supporting characters, such as siblings and their children, aging parents, or even a maiden aunt who lives with her relatives. In Degler's world, by contrast, there are only urban yuppies, doing their own thing without extended familial attachments.

It is by means of this privileged model that he points us toward the future: "Will it be possible for women and men to work out some arrangement, call it family or something else, in which these two goals can be realized? Or must the historical drive for women's individuality stop short of full realization in the name of children, husband and family?" Having brought us this far, Degler now looks across the Jordan River: "Never before has the tension been so evident or the room for maneuver so narrow. After 200 years of development both the future of the family and the fulfillment of women as persons are at odds as never before. Presumably a resolution will come in something less than two centuries." Need the reader doubt about which side will—and, as viewed by Degler, should—triumph in the fullness of time?

A skeptic might want to raise the question about whether Degler is describing the totality of American society, or merely confining himself to his colleagues at Stanford. But conceding the tension he stressed, why should we assume everyone will be okay in two centuries? Are we to make the improbable assumption that the worsening tension between possessive individualism and social obligation will be resolved within 200 years by affluent couples guided by enlightened self-interest? Professor Degler is of course free to believe anything he likes. Fortunately, the rest of us still have the right to ignore this comedy disguised as history, and to look for the real thing outside the academy.

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UTOPIAS AND IDEOLOGIES

by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn

People who "think ahead," like Prometheus, have always constructed utopias which are the outflow of their reflections and ideas—in other words, of their ideologies. On the other hand, most Americans who call themselves "conservatives" manifest a hostility towards ideologies and even more towards utopias.

"Ideology" as a term was invented by Count Destutt de Tracy, used ironically by Napoleon, stuck by Marx onto "bourgeois" thinkers and, finally, applied by Lenin to *all* systems of political, social, economic, and cultural thought. The Germans, before 1945, called it *Weltanschauung*, but National Socialism made it an "unword." It disappeared from almost everywhere, to be replaced by *Ideologie, ideologia, ideology*. Many people will tell you that ideologies have caused untold harm and been responsible for millions of human deaths. This, unfortunately, is equally true of religions. But there are religions that effectively preach love, others that preach love but don't practice it, and still others—like that of the Shiite "assassins"—that preach sanctified violence. Ideologies also can be totalitarian, bellicose and repressive, or have tolerance and freedom built into them.

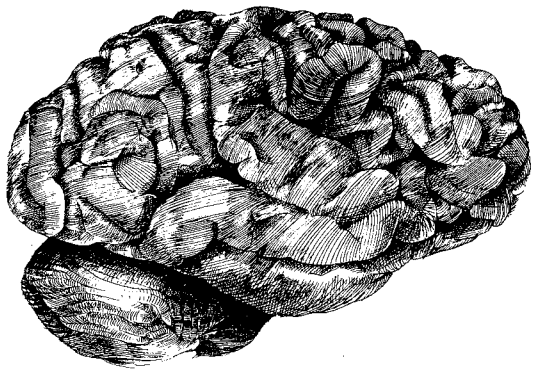
A relative uniformity of thought exists in the English-speaking nations. This consensus is based largely on a common frame of reference that is lacking in the Old World. Yet North America and Britain are not much given to general ideas. The burning genius of Burke does not hide from us his disgust for abstractions: "I even hate the sound of the words which express them." Even so, it would be a colossal error to believe that "Anglo-Saxonry" is strictly unideological. Man is an ideological creature who creates either streamlined, logically foolproof and consistent ideologies, or sloppily constructed ones with inner contradictions. "American liberalism" is a classic example of the second kind.

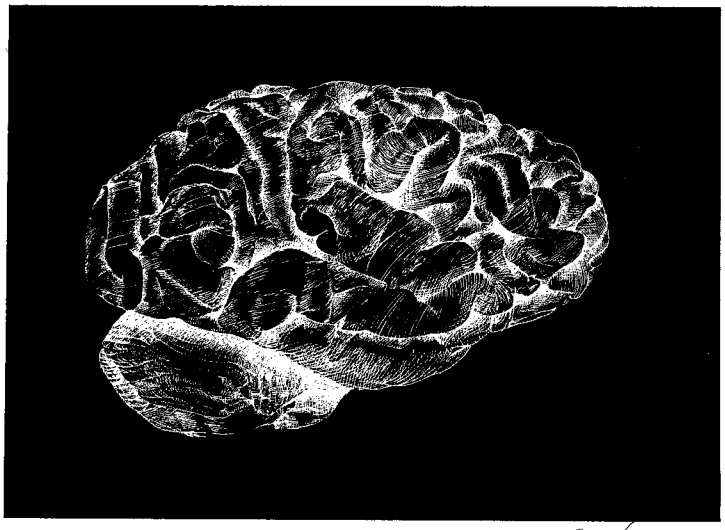
In many cases what we might call "Americanism" is a mixture of varying beliefs which almost, but not quite, form an organic whole—a belief in progress, human equality, democracy, a certain anti-elitism and an affirmation of freedom. More often than not, "American ideology" will blend in religion, hardly aware that the Bible contains a solid message of human inequality and that equality and liberty are irreconcilable. When William Dean Howells observed that "Inequality and Freedom" are the basic American ideals, he obviously had in mind sentiments and not an ideological program. Human beings are not equal, *least of all* in the eyes of God. If Judas Iscariot is equal to St. John the Baptist, Christianity can close shop.

All this has to do with the American Tragedy. To begin with, there *never* was an American Revolution in 1776, only a War of Independence. Unfortunately, there later came the influence of the French Revolution—1828 marks a real watershed in American history, as Henry Adams noted. Charles Beard told us in so many words that the Founding Fathers hated democracy more than Original Sin. Jefferson's remark that we are "created equal" is, unfortunately, the words of a slave-owner who merely wanted to point out that "our British brethren" are not superior to Americans and have no right to rule over them. And the continuation of the American Tragedy has to be found in this century, when America is engaged in jihads to make the world safe for a *French* ideology!

Whittaker Chambers denied that he was a conservative (a term, in America, embracing everyone from crypto-monarchists to anarchists) and called himself a rightist. Allan Bloom, in his *Closing of the American Mind*, insists that all great Europeans (starting with Socrates) were men of the right. He should have added that this was equally true of the great Americans from Cotton Mather to Orestes Brownson to Henry Adams and Irving Babbitt. Goethe said that legislators and revolutionaries promising equality together with liberty are dreamers or frauds.

Looking at the efforts to realize the Marxist utopia in the USSR, one must admit that for the people born in this godless monastery it is a complete failure. For the West, on the other hand, this "vision" remains a blood-chilling





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menace regardless of its record. The Soviet leadership has an ideology and thus a mission. We only have a Constitution as a mere frame, with no picture in it. The Communists have a picture, which attracts millions outside the USSR, including willing collaborators from the highest social ranks of the half-educated. Even a wicked picture is better than none.

Talking frequently to people in a variety of countries about Chile, I've found so many who insist that Chile should revert to democracy and have free and unfettered elections. "As Germany had in 1932?" I ask, whereupon I get a blank stare. So it is really the frame which is all-important. The democratic ideology—yes, it is, after all, an ideology—is "numeralistic." While the USSR, led by a global concept of an all-embracing utopia, advances in power, we go on counting noses. What great alternative, what utopia, has America's traditional conservatism been offering the nation? Rightism ought to be the apostle of *eternal* values in the light of divine revelation and the global historical experience, not just a spirited defender of the status quo within a purely local horizon. Hermann Borchardt said in his *The Conspiracy of the Carpenters*: "For we, too, my friends are partisans . . . We too . . . we Christian conservatives, are, *let us hope*, an international party; and if we are not as yet, we mean to become one. The difference between the Urbanites and us is not, then, that they are international and we national. I hope not: a national party in our day is about as important as a bridge club or an association of canary breeders. No, the difference is that we are the party of God, while they are the party of Satan, the Lord of the World."

Not a single tenet of democracy can be verified scientifically, and its only future can be its evolution into a secular religion.

The trouble with American conservatism is its perplexity about the future, the lack of vision, the absence of radical alternatives. In a lecture I gave years ago at Hillsdale College, I dealt with this great weakness in American conservatism and reproached American conservatives for not having given young Americans a program, a blueprint, a utopia. A movement that will really succeed needs a pictorial vision for which men and women will toil, make sacrifices, and, if necessary, die. To my delight, I received not only applause but a standing ovation.

Too many conservatives, too many Americans believe that with the Constitution of 1787 and the democratizing ("gallicizing") Amendments our political wisdom had reached its fullest and final maturity. However, as Disraeli declared, "Finality is not the language of politics." We must bear in mind that foreign affairs and defense—once mere footnotes to the American political scene—are today key problems of our *physical survival*. In 1952, Dean Acheson, Truman's last secretary of state, told a friend of mine that it had been his tragic task in an atomic age to form and fashion the foreign policy of a superpower that still had the constitution of a small farmer's republic dating back to the 18th century. Acheson did not mention the "French connection" of America's constitutional development, which brought the US the most government of the lowest quality. Of course, the Founding Fathers wanted minimal government of the highest quality. Andrew Jackson naively declared in his first presidential message that "the duties of all public officers are, or at least admit of being made, so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance." Unfortunately, the results of this highly democratic conviction have been disastrous.

Both the masses and the experts are unanimous in their opinion of the "peoples' representatives" all over the globe—the words "politics" and "politicians" have universally assumed a highly negative character. Unavoidably, the abyss between the *scita* and the *scienda*, the actual knowledge and the necessary knowledge for reaching sound political decisions, increases by leaps and bounds. This is equally true of the voters and of those they elect. In the end, the uneducated elect the quarter-educated who, in turn, receive in total confusion the conflicting advice of the half-educated. The lack of knowledge and resulting conviction create a parliamentary race of men and women whose single purpose in life is to be elected or reelected, even at the price of sacrificing everything—sanity, integrity, conscience—for that one purpose.

Parliaments, we must remember, were created as legislative, not policymaking bodies. They might best be replaced by lobbies honestly and openly arguing in dialogue with the government. Democracy (mentioned neither in the Declaration nor in the Constitution) is not rational. Not a single tenet of democracy can be verified scientifically, and its only future can be its evolution into a secular religion. There can be little doubt that a metamorphosis in that direction has already taken place, *vide* the violent indignation of closed minds if the dogmas of democracy are challenged. As dogma, however, it is bound to fail, because such a "faith" has to deliver its goods right here on earth.

The German example shows that the ideological fabric of liberal democracy was (and is) terribly brittle. In the free elections with proportional representation from 1930 to 1932, the German liberal democratic parties disappeared almost totally, because their supporters and the habitual nonvoters turned "brown." The strictly ideological or religious parties kept their devotees to the bitter end. Marxists, monarchists, and Catholics often paid with their lives for their convictions, while Jews paid for their race, and Catholic Jews for both. But there were no liberal democratic martyrs in the Third Reich. Who in Russia fought the Bolsheviks in the civil war against overwhelming odds? Christians, monarchists, and anarchists—certainly not liberal democrats!

Genuine liberals in Europe have always realized that a total lack of ideological conviction is, in the long run, incompatible with the human condition. Ludwig von Mises shuddered at the possibility that the masses might choose the wrong ideologies. Friedrich August von Hayek told us that without an ideology no society can exist longer than 24 hours, and he regretted that real liberalism was unable to produce a utopia. James Buchanan, another Nobel laureate, demanded the creation of a "mild" utopia. No sensible

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human being, in his younger years at least, can dream of a full life without a fairly concrete vision of what he wants to become, to achieve, to represent, and of the world he wants to inhabit. No nation can organically survive without envisioning a specific role, a real task, an honorable mission.

What will we in the Western world do when democracy comes to an end? When people realize that the answers to the momentous problems facing them no longer can be objectively and satisfactorily explained by television? When they reach the conclusion that their "leaders" are as confused as they themselves? When they find out that democracy is dominated by a Gresham's Law? (Are we not all "elitists"? Don't we, if gravely ill and able to afford it, call for the very best physician and not for the most popular?)

A sudden end of democracy? The Middle Ages were characterized by an absolute contempt for an ignorant, stupid, lazy, and immoral clergy—a situation taken for granted and contemplated with complete equanimity even by pious souls. This went on for centuries, until one nice day Martin Luther banged on the table, shouted his protest, and the Catholic Church lost all its northern domains (which were only partly recovered by the Counter-Reformation based on the Council of Trent). Only now we should expect not another Luther but another Hitler.

Quite a number of American conservatives are "populists" and believe in the superiority of intuition over the ignorance that characterizes so many people in the media, the administration, and at Ivy League universities. Modern industry and science, as well as the rapid shrinking of the globe, render rank amateurism in government not only obsolete, but a deadly threat. Thus technocracy and real expertise become more and more inevitable. Even Rousseau (one of the fathers of modern democracy) admitted in a lucid moment that to make democracy work properly, people ought to be gods.

What we need for the entire Western world is an ideology *and* a utopia, a vision for a possible good and right order for the requirements of our age, one that is based on eternal truths and values, recognizing the uniqueness of every human being—in other words, freedom. This implies, once again, minimal government of the highest quality acting with authority.

It is hard to envisage how such an organic ideology and utopia could exist without a religious foundation. It should not be a mere manifestation of human "constructivism" (to use Hayek's word). An intercontinental ideology ought to be neither a mere umbrella for rainy days, nor a straitjacket. There must be guaranteed liberties for the nonconformists, coupled with genuine freedom of expression—without, however, privileges for select groups; this would be a prescription for long-term ruin.

At present, unfortunately, we are facing The Enemy in utter nakedness. If we are to be spared a global war, we will have to resist intellectually, spiritually, and "sensitively." The life-and-death struggle in this case will be between ideologies and utopias. This is not an attractive prospect for an anti-ideological and anti-intellectual America, but sometimes we have to go against our own grain. Let us adopt the optimism of D.H. Lawrence, who told us: "Democracy is the utter hardening of the old skin, the old form, the old psyche. It hardens till it is tight and fixed and inorganic. Then it *must* burst, like a chrysalis shell. And out must come the soft grub, or the soft damp butterfly, of the American-at-last." Let us make an effort to prove him right.

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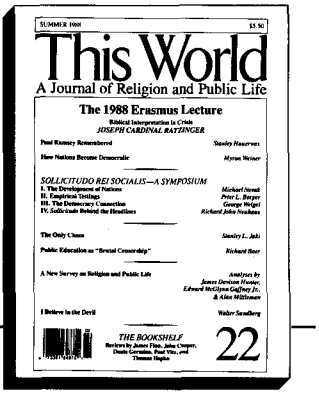

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Tradition and Justice *by E. Christian Kopff*

We have forgotten the origin of morality in fact and circumstance.

—Wendell Berry

Whose Justice? Which Rationality? **by Alasdair MacIntyre, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.**

Alasdair MacIntyre is our most relentless tracker of the crisis of the liberal regime. In *After Virtue*, he recounted the history of the triumph of "emotivism" in ethics. In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* he has begun the process of pointing the way out of the seemingly pathless forest of ethical subjectivism. He is not afraid to assert that the cure for our present crisis lies in reading the great texts of philosophy.

That liberalism is in crisis has been clear for some time. It has been compelled to deny almost all of its fundamental ethical and political positions. Having asserted the morality of One Man, One Vote, it found it possible to remain in power only by gerrymandering the House of Representatives, so that that body can no longer be affected by the changing will of the majority. It championed the rights of the helpless, but now supports a system that condemns millions of guiltless children to death without the right of due process. It proclaimed the Century of the Common Man, but maintains its rule through an autocracy of judges and bureaucrats who despise the average American and his way of life.

There is, however, a more deep-seated crisis, one that threatens the minds and hearts of the true believers. Since the Enlightenment, liberalism has maintained a consistent antipathy to attitudes rooted in tradition and supported by prejudice, especially religious tradition and prejudice. The result has been stated by James Fishkin.

> The viability of liberalism as a political theory is closely tied to the possibility of a secular moral culture founded on something other than the controversial religious and metaphysical assumptions of any particular group. If, in order to maintain neutrality among religious and metaphysical assumptions, a liberal state must be constrained from any rational basis for values at all, then its foundational assumptions are *self-delegitimating*, that is, they undermine their own moral legitimacy by entailing the arbitrariness, the sheer subjectivity, of all moral claims, including any claims that can be made on behalf of the liberal state itself.

In *Beyond Subjective Morality* Fishkin examined the plight of the average educated person trying to establish a rational system of practical ethics based on individualism and a rejection of tradition. Those who did not repudiate liberalism ended up on one level or another of subjectivism (what MacIntyre would call emotivism). Ethics became a matter of personal taste. For Sam, one of Fishkin's subjects, his taste for honesty "has no more basis than his taste for T-bone steaks": "I grew up and developed a taste for honesty—that's as far as I can take it," Sam mused. "Even if I believed in, say, communism, as a political system, the way I am now, I wouldn't believe that that would give me a right to dictate to some capitalist that communism was the right system for him." Fishkin attempts to show that it is logically possible to escape the lowest depths of subjectivism. He never shows that the various stages of subjectivism are not logical conclusions of liberalism's premises:

> Independent of particular

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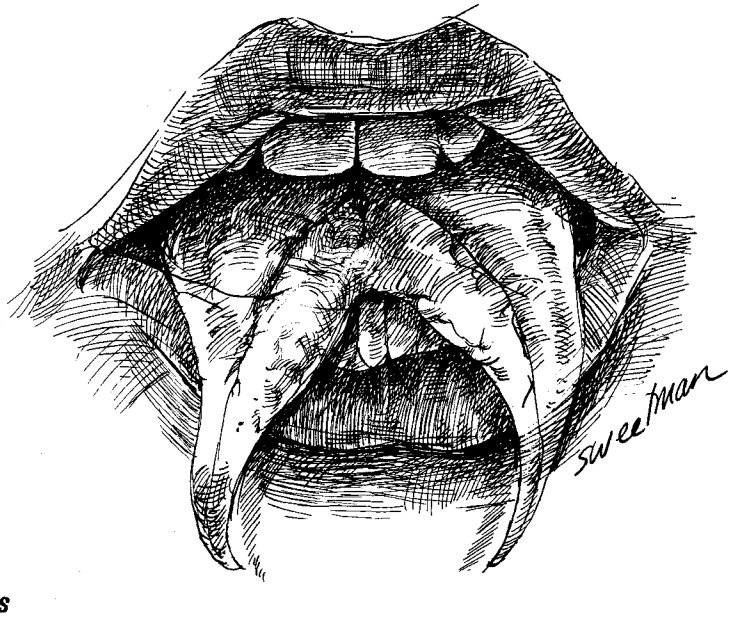

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> religious and metaphysical assumptions . . . can there be a nonarbitrary basis for making moral judgments? Without a positive answer to this question, liberalism must self-destruct as a coherent moral ideology.

Liberalism's attempts to give a positive answer have never provided an adequate motive for individual moral decision-making, and they have failed to satisfy philosophers as a coherent basis for social action. Omitting Kant, the most famous answer in the English-speaking world was utilitarianism, born in the early 19th century and connected with the names of Bentley and Mill. Utilitarianism still survives in economics, where its premises seem to satisfy (much like a ship can be steered by the stars, using the Ptolemaic, geocentric vision of the universe). Philosophers view utilitarianism as incoherent and long since refuted.

In recent decades, Bruce Ackerman and John Rawls (among others) have tried to resuscitate Enlightenment social contract theory. This theory contradicts everything we know of the origin of the state, which evolved out of the family and conquest, not out of a meeting of rational individuals. It has become a favorite philosophical parlor game to discover situations in which the theory's basic premises lead to results that are repugnant to most people's moral feelings. Liberalism as a theory for practical moral reasoning does not work, and the hypocrisy and immorality of the liberal regime is the result of its philosophical failure.

Alasdair MacIntyre has accepted the conclusions of philosophical scholarship and made the natural deduction: practical ethical reasoning must take place within a definite, historically conditioned tradition, a tradition that brings with it certain religious and metaphysical assumptions or, if you prefer, prejudices. If "it would be out of bounds for the liberal state to base moral arguments—and, in particular, to base its own claims to legitimacy—on the ultimate convictions of any particular group," as Fishkin believes, then the liberal state is a logical monstrosity and the problems it is now undergoing are a necessary and inevitable prelude to its own implosion.

MacIntyre does not give us another logical refutation of Rawls or Ackerman. The bibliography here is overwhelming, and even clever graduate students—say, the junior faculty in Rawls's own department at Harvard—can give us more than enough material. Instead, MacIntyre tells the story of the creation of the Western tradition of thinking about justice and the problems of practical ethical reasoning from Homer to Hume. He tells the story not by listing the beliefs of a long train of thinkers, but by reading carefully a few of the important ones: Homer, Pericles, Thucydides (MacIntyre thinks he can distinguish between the last two), Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas. Aristotle is the subject of an especially careful discussion. Then MacIntyre takes his time to paint a picture of the social and philosophical background, in the writings of Dalrymple of Stair, Hutcheson, and Hume, of the Scotland of the Enlightenment and the age which preceeded it. It is the epic adventure story of a philosophical tradition, the equivalent of Tolkien's Ring Trilogy in the life of the mind. No summary can do justice to it, but let me point out a few of the highlights.

The foundation of our ways of thinking about how we act is Homer. Before there is an individual, there is the hero. Is the hero great, however, because he exemplifies excellence, or because he wins? In Homer, such a question cannot really be asked. The dichotomy does not exist. Greek society develops on the Homeric model and in the 5th century the distinction becomes dangerously real. Pericles is the political radical who builds on the Homeric foundations: the people of Athens is a Homeric hero and the Athenian Empire is the new Tale of Troy. The Age of Pericles is also the Age of the Sophists, and the Sophists show that political success can thrive apart from ethical commitment. Thucydides in the Melian Dialogue and Sophocles in *Philoctetes* see the problem. It is Plato, especially in his *Republic*, who expresses the dilemma most clearly and offers the greatest defense of excellence against mere practical success. "Plato made of the sophists partners in posing these problems in a way that provided . . . a permanent part of the framework of all subsequent discussion. . . . This is why the reading and the continuous rereading of the *Republic* remains indispensable to moral and cultural education."

That Plato's work has been built so essentially into the framework of our thinking was the achievement of Aristotle. For centuries philosophers were born into the world as Platonists and Aristotelians like the "little Conservatives and little Liberals" of Gilbert and Sullivan. This vision was undercut by Werner Jaeger's idea that Aristotle began intellectual life as a Platonist, and later scholars (including Gwyll Owen) have shown how similar Aristotle is to late Plato. For MacIntyre, Aristotle is "engaged in trying to complete Plato's work, and to correct it precisely insofar as that was necessary in order to complete it."

MacIntyre's picture of Aristotle puts almost every page into a new light, clarifying scores of problems and paradoxes present in older visions. It is the picture of a man working within a tradition. Tradition is not memorizing and handing down the concepts and theories of the past, with occasional footnotes and retranslations into contemporary forms of thought or expression. Tradition is the living interaction of human minds engaged in the same task. It is the foundation of all creativity and of all progress. Wendell Berry's words come to mind:

> Any man's death could end the story:
> his mourners, having accompanied him
> to the grave through all he knew,
> turn back, leaving him complete.
>
> But this is not the story of a life.
> It is the story of lives, knit together,
> overlapping in succession, rising again from grave after grave.
>
> For those who depart from it, bearing it
> in their minds, the grave is a beginning. . . .
>
> Ended, a story is history;
> it is in time, with time
> lost. But if a man's life
> continue in another man,
> then the flesh will rhyme
> its part in immortal song.

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By absence, he comes again.

The handing down of the torch of human understanding is a risky business. Each generation may drop it or run off in a direction that ends in a cul-de-sac. There is more. Each generation leaves to its successors problems within the tradition that are unresolved. Other traditions will arise and a choice must be made between running away, conquering, or assimilating aspects of the alien. At any one time all three may be happening. Cicero made Greek thought live in great literature in Latin. The genius of Augustine and Aquinas assimilated Christian perspectives into the living reality of Plato and Aristotle. That tradition, by genius and humane assimilation, survives through the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The dividing line is the Enlightenment. The task of assimilating so much novelty calls for a great mind, a new Aquinas. We get Hume and Kant. Instead of working to revise and revivify the great tradition, which was still alive, as MacIntyre shows, but in need of some first-rate rethinking, they undermine it, by positing the possibility of practical thinking that is valid for the individual, anywhere, anytime—not for a member of a social and intellectual community. (It seems to me that this account works better for the heavily Rousseau-ized Kant than for Hume, who was trying to do for Scotland what Cicero did for ancient Rome.)

So the Enlightenment vendetta against tradition and prejudice is established. Gadamer pointed out the Enlightenment prejudice against prejudice. MacIntyre surveys briefly the story of "the history of attempts to construct a morality for tradition-free individuals," the story of "Liberalism Transformed into a Tradition."

This attempt has failed both for the professional philosopher, who keeps it up because *c'est son métier*, and for the average citizen, who is driven to subjectivism and hypocrisy. MacIntyre offers no easy way out of the dilemma. "Any hope of discovering tradition-independent standards of judgment turns out to be illusory." Does this not leave us more or less where liberalism left us, with no rational way to make practical ethical decisions where traditions conflict? Not necessarily. Thinking within a tradition is not only "tradition-constituted" but also "tradition-constitutive." Thinking within a tradition is creative, indeed, it provides the only basis for creativity. To put it another way, what we call creativity in thought and literature is really the humane assimilation of old problems and new insights. There are traditions that have shown themselves able to respond creatively and positively to outside insights and visions—for example, the tradition that extends from Homer through Plato and Aristotle, and then is kept alive by Augustine and Aquinas. Societies have been built on these foundations. Great works of literature, from Plato's *Symposium* to Augustine's *Confessions* and Dante's *Commedia*, have been written out of them. This tradition can be made to live again and we must try, as we watch the tradition of liberalism sink into the miasma of violence, racism, and pornography.

There are other lively traditions that need to be tested. MacIntyre specifically mentions Judaism, Islam, and Lutheranism. I think he is right and I believe that one of them is more likely than the others to provide a rational basis for the creation of a valid tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive philosophy for an Augustinian Christian, as MacIntyre styles himself. Where he sees no hope is from the tradition of Whig conservatism that began with Burke and is now represented by the neoconservatives and other liberals who are commonly called "conservatives." For them, tradition is passive, an environment and not an *agon*. Burke's English cattle ignore the buzzing of the radical flies of summer. Unfortunately, those cattle have been stampeded by the flies' stingers. These conservatives use the Great Books, translated into a misleading contemporary English, to lead us back to the liberalism and subjectivism that is suffocating our society. MacIntyre has nothing but scorn for "the confident teaching of texts from past and alien cultures in translation not only to students who do not know the original languages but by teachers who do not know them either." The reader should not be surprised that MacIntyre devotes pages to the problem of translation, of understanding texts written in foreign languages. Classics in translation in education is the equivalent to strip mining in ecology. Reading Homer and trying to be fair to your neighbor both involve activities which are not satisfactorily explained by the world view of individualism.

For our society to survive, we must escape from a rapidly imploding liberalism into a tradition of ethical reasoning that can provide the basis for consensus and progress. As Lord Devlin told us in his Maccabean Lecture in 1959, "No society has yet solved the problem of how to teach morality without religion." In addition, we must take the center of our educational establishment from the hands of the economist and the engineer and give it back to the teacher of languages and the teacher of philosophy. It is hard to decide which imperative sounds more utopian. It is the irony of our age that it is the pragmatic alternative which is really utopian and must end in disaster for our society and our children.

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Socialism and Reality in Central America

by Geoffrey Wagner

It is good also not to try experiments in states.
—Francis Bacon

Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952-1986 **by Morris H. Morley, New York: Cambridge University Press.**

The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America **by Tom J. Farer, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.**

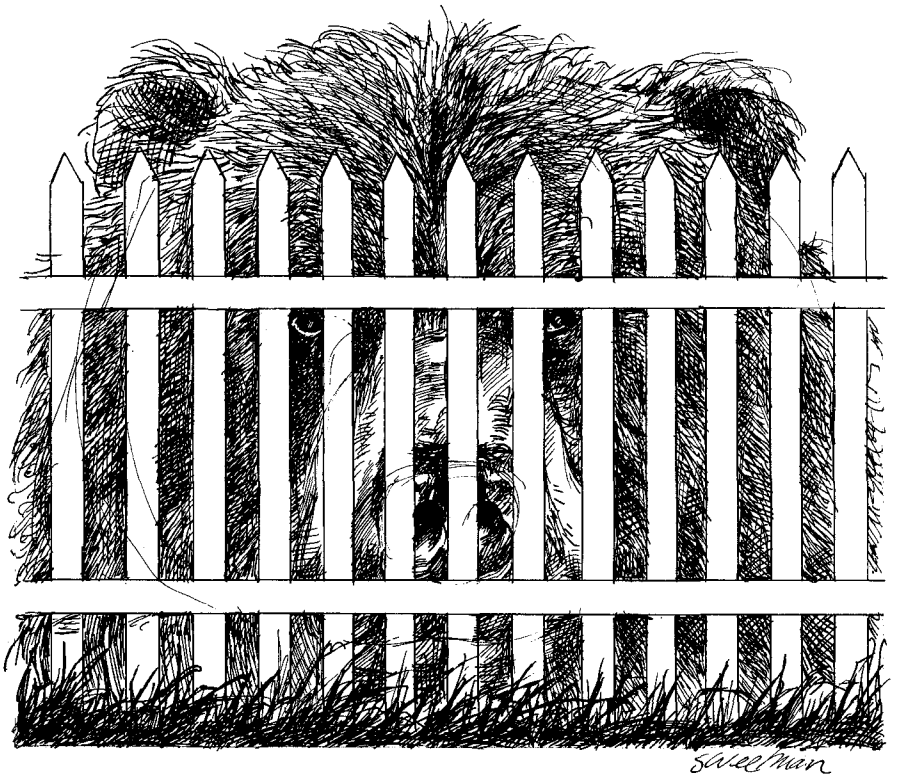
The Bear in the Backyard: Moscow's Caribbean Strategy **by Timothy Ashby, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.**

As a term, *imperialism* underwent a number of visions and revisions at the turn of the century when the fact itself was receding. There was Bernard Bosanquet's British interpretation and, in France, the Baron de la Seillière's multivolume opus. Such were radically redefined by Lenin in 1916 and it is from one of his pockets that Morris Morley's brick of a book emerges (128 pages of small-print footnotes, and if the author read every entry in his bibliography he can have done little else in life). The whole churns out of the graduate carrels of the Department of Sociology of the State University of New York at Binghampton. I have long felt that doctoral dissertations should be franked with readership warnings—THIS BOOK MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR INSOMNIA—and Morley's is predictably leaden reading of the kind accomplished with gritted teeth, holding hard to the arms of one's chair. One chews at a sofa bed whose infrastructure is this:

> The US government, conceived of as the imperial state, is viewed as the engine of a worldwide system of capital accumulation . . . . The imperial state does not function on the basis of its own inner logic, but responds to the interests and demands of capitalists seeking to move capital abroad and to pursue accumulation . . . it seeks to maintain and, if necessary, recreate (by destabilizing political regimes, by electoral intervention) the optimal environment for capital accumulation and expansion in particular Third World societies.

Which is to say that since America has never had an empire, nor acquired territories of late, you can only call it imperial, by Orwellian law and Leninist praxis, in view of its virtue (or vice) of capital accumulation. This sophistry is convenient, since not only does it duck Russian land or proxy possession, it can indict every aspect and agency of the US government, down to the Department of Commerce (guilty of promoting our exports). For these agencies create a "universe within which multinational capital operates" and capital export is here seen as invariably "economic, coercive, and ideological" (despite extra-American global factors). Lend someone money and it is tainted with ideological pressures (tell that to Citibank of its lost African and South American loans). In fact, America is considered heartlessly stingy when it does not scatter dollars abroad and brutal when it calls in its debts.

Morley substantiates his theory by instancing American economic coercion of, chiefly, Cuba. From the downfall of the second Batista presidency on, his documentation is very thorough and shows, as expected, case after case of missed American opportunities. There is bias in the presentation—not all Cubans would agree that Castro's 1959 courts carried out a "relatively limited number of executions," while Fidel's adventures in Angola and Grenada are served up through Cuban sources (quite incorrect in the latter case); but by the



Geoffrey Wagner's latest book, Red Calypso, *is a study of Cuban adventurism in the Caribbean.*

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time one has slogged through this hands-off-everything recital of dollar diplomacy one cannot help being left with a certain gratitude for US interventions on behalf of its borders and threatened nationals. After all, Russia does not have a hostile island arsenal 90 miles off its shores, nor do we indict Japan for overseas capital accumulations (in America, no less).

Imperialism turns into a mere buzzword, for there can be no comparison between Soviet physical coercion since World War II and American economic chess games. Eisenhower, Morley cites with shock, "refused to trust the Russians to even the slightest degree." That's "bourgeois morality" for you. In short, the ammunition Morley so assiduously assembles for his thesis could, in other hands, support its opposite. Turn it around and you have Chapman Pincher's *The Secret Offensive*. Morley's source book shows sociology once again as the enemy of free enterprise (v. David Marsland's *Seeds of Bankruptcy*).

Supported by another university, good old Rutgers, Tom Farer's critique of our foreign policy seems to see Russia as less of a threat than Jeane Kirkpatrick. The book is sown with excitable attacks on our former UN ambassador, who has "given aid and comfort to the butchers at the gate of change." We are told of "the sneering brutality of her own polemics" which rest "on an almost demented parody of Latin American political realities." Her prose is "hysterical" with "a heroic indifference to detail," while "her own insensitivity to real contexts is stupefying." She is "rabidly dogmatic," guilty of "simple mendacity," and so on. One gets the impression that these hate phrases have been taste-tested for lyrical malice on the author's envious tongue before committal to print.

Despite this litany of gibes, the book is an impressive piece of research, if sharing in the contradictions it indicts. Its central section addresses the apparently insoluble conflict between human rights norms and egalitarian reform, a rural Central American peasantry being tied to the outgoing oligarchy (even voting for the same), while rights advocacy actually diminishes their welfare.

Still and all, it is hard to swallow some of Farer's generalizations, e.g.: "the Mossadeq and Arbenz regimes had indisputably democratic credentials. Certainly, their claim to be representative governments was, at a minimum, no less persuasive than that of the present government of El Salvador." In a ridicule of the domino theory in Southeast Asia, we learn that Thailand and Malaysia "have never been more securely upright." And that Mexico is a "conservative capitalist" country. As a general rule, "[s]ome leftist governments may arise. But the experience of the last 20 years demonstrates that they will pursue their own interests and eventually accommodate with the West." Really? When we further read that "authoritarian-socialist regimes do *not* as a group display a strong tendency to produce economic stagnation" (Cuba being accorded a high economic grade), we wonder whose is the "demented parody" here. Colombia is misspelt throughout (except in the index), Brazil is not properly a Latin country, and the absurd Lumumba is lauded.

The book ends with a detailed section on overseas interventions. Here one must have serious quarrels. Jean-François Revel long ago shot down the equivalence theory, e.g., that US "occupation" of the Dominican Republic could in any way be called similar to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (how many land mines and mutilated children did we leave behind in the former?). Reading "that a mobilized, politically aware population will not for long submit to government by junta, even a junta which enjoys the glamour of military victory and employs egalitarian rhetoric," one thinks of Cuba and Guyana. And is it true that "never in its entire modern history has the United States supported a revolution against tyrannies of the Right"? The shades of Somoza, Batista, Marcos, and Duvalier rise up to protest. Despite such cavils, I was always interested in Farer's book; the trouble was I couldn't find anything decisive in it. No wonder he was a university president. Thank heavens he was never secretary of state.

Tim Ashby could, and should, be. Still in his early 20's, this brilliant Heritage Foundation policy analyst has produced by far the best book of the three, a closely researched study of Russia in the Caribbean. It is principally devoted to Cuban vassalage since Moscow started giving the area the benefit of its attention circa 1960, with a coda on Soviet power probes into Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guyana, and Suriname. A depressing lack of resolve on our part emerges, from Herbert Matthews' *New York Times* comment of 1957 that "there is no communism to speak of in Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement," to Carter's "no need to panic."

The detailed documentation Ashby adduces of hostile Russian armament just off our southern shores is compelling and makes books like Farer's academic in all senses. Imagine the same off Murmansk. And now Nicaragua, with by far the largest armed force in Central America, lies athwart the isthmus itself. After all, America bought the Virgin Islands for their geostrategic importance when its southern flank was far less vulnerable than it is today. Our present answer to this threat seems to be to appoint as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere a congressman who abstained from the 416-0 House vote in 1983 condemning the Russian shooting down of Korean Airlines 007, and who filed suit against Reagan for liberating Grenada.

Ashby delineates this situation with passion and grace, reminding us that originally the Cuban Communist Party worked *with* Batista (to topple Prío) until Fidel saw Leninism as the road to power rather than a mere creedal conviction. In a final chapter Ashby strikes a note of cautious optimism despite recent developments in Mexico (which sheltered Castro's exile base and assisted the Ortegas as well as Grenada's Maurice Bishop). There have been external rescues from proxy communisms (postwar Malaya, Grenada) but none mounted from within, yet Ashby shows that the momentum of Russian imperialism has at least been halted here and there (Suriname, El Salvador, Angola) in a way that augurs some optimism about Nicaragua. The bear's bank vault is not bottomless. Let us stretch it all we can. All in all, Ashby's book is splendid background to doubtless forthcoming confrontations in the field and thoroughly deserves its six printings and book club choice. Resolve is all.

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Children of Fortune

by Paul T. Hornak

Each social class has its own pathology.

—Proust

Old Money: The Mythology of America's Upper Class **by Nelson W. Aldrich Jr., New York: Alfred A. Knopf.**

Going by the title and subtitle alone, it would appear that this is either a book about the lies rich people tell each other, or a book transforming the jingle of coins into the crash of magical cymbals. Having read it through, I am happy to report that the latter is the case. Aldrich has, to use the late Joseph Campbell's definition of myth, given us a poetic reading of the mystery of life from a certain interested point of view. His particular imponderable is inherited wealth, in which he is "interested" because he is himself "old money," and proud of it. Surprise of surprises. In these days when Stanford declares it elitist to teach Plato, a proud rich man is rare indeed. And he is rare not just in his pride but in his capacity for wonder. For Aldrich, inherited wealth confers more than economic power. It involves its recipients in metaphysical drama.

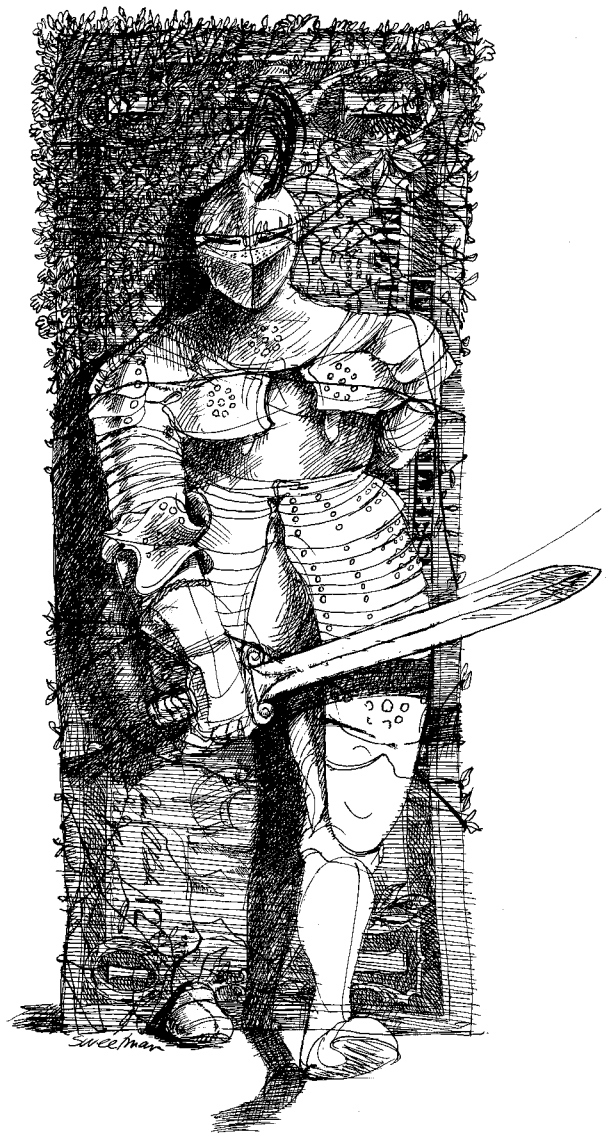
This last claim is not as outlandish as it seems. Consider Aldrich on Senator Aldrich (1841-1915), his great-grandfather, onetime wholesale grocer become landed gentleman:

> There was more to my forebear's "innate class sense" than an appreciation of the imperative congruity of status and estate, the spatial dimension, so to speak, of one's social standing. He had an equally fine appreciation of the imperative of a standing in time. . . . He was not an aristocrat, except perhaps in the "natural" sense. He was a patrician. . . .

Who else could have written with such confidence about the hidden workings of fortune than a child of fortune, a "privileged creature . . . attentive, indeed morbidly so, to the resonance" of his conduct? Aldrich is very nearly a poet of the American upper classes. Between generally-known historical detail and his own special knowledge he establishes ties that, for any other writer, would be all stitches and seams. He astutely records the unique mentality of the moneyed. There is the section whose chief joy is urinating in ladies' reticules. There is Tommy Hitchcock, polo champion with a self-sacrificial longing—he died testing (unnecessarily) an early version of a World War II combat plane. And then there is Aldrich's own class-driven psychology, that of the rich boy who taught English to elementary kids in Harlem, who sees a link between the independence of the wealthy and Huck Finn's escape down the Mississippi. His is a unique vision of unique visions.

Yet *Old Money* is not simply a book on the psychology of inherited wealth. It proposes, first, to justify "old money" as a social force, and second, to evaluate its performance so far. To these tasks the charming poet is, regrettably, unequal.

His difficulty with the first task arises because his commendable desire to give inherited wealth a foundation other than fiscal finds support only in economic evidence. Thus, even as he claims that the rich do things for America that no other class can, he says they do it primarily because of their bank balances. Kennedy served with disinterested panache—because wealth mellowed his attitude toward life, allowing him, among other things, a jocular self-confidence. "Laughter is what the White House servants missed after the Theodore Roosevelts moved out, and laughter is what they said they welcomed when the Franklin Roosevelts moved back in." The Boston Symphony lends *gravitas* to the national life—though without their cash, its wealthy benefactors would just as soon patronize Michael Jackson. Insofar as American society possesses stability at all, the rich provide it, distinguishing the top from the bottom, setting standards of right and wrong, of taste, of honor—yet no ideas or beliefs motivate the rich in this unceasing and thankless enterprise. According to Aldrich, they do it because "old money," both here and in Europe, always has. The child of wealth nurtured by extended families on extensive estates, educated at severe boarding schools, socialized in exclusive clubs and at the summer places around Penobscot Bay, simply grows, like a plant, into his role as a preserver of culture, promoter of civilization, dispenser of gifts. In other words, the rather unenlightening message is that wealth, fed by wealth and watered with



Paul T. Hornak has written for Oasis *magazine*, The New York Times, *and* Reason.

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time, yields superman.

Aldrich surely does not intend such a conclusion, for he betrays a complicated sensibility in attributing his own *noblesse oblige* to something called *pietas*. I would like very much to define what he means by the word, but once again poetry works against him. Describing its effects—a reverence for grandparents, a sense of history, a vague belief in eternal recurrence—he seems to be transplanting ancestor worship from the temples of Tokyo to the mansions of Newport. It survives the journey, but emerges more muddled, if possible, than it is at its place of origin.

To distinguish, finally, between those who *use* money from those who merely possess it, Aldrich resorts to the pyrotechnics of contrast. He discerns a historic contentiousness between "old money" and its necessary opposite, "new money." By "new money" he means the big-spending entrepreneur, promoted to wealth by hard effort of hand and mind. A recent arrival bursting with pride and appetite, "new money" denies obligation to society. Instead of speaking of the bottom line in hushed, somewhat embarrassed tones, "new money" flaunts wealth, elevating it to preeminence on the scale of human worth: a man is nothing unless he earns. The factions, of course, are bitter enemies, and never more so than at present. "Ronald Reagan installed an administration composed almost entirely of self-made men (men, indeed, who were determined to use their offices to make it), and by the end of his second term Reagan had fed a flock of torrent birds whose droppings nauseated patrician sensibilities as nothing had since the days of Richard Whitney."

Now, Whitney went to Sing Sing for stealing from the trust accounts of persons as rich and well-connected as he was himself. As an example of errant wealth, the main virtue of his case has to be its relative recency (1938), because for sheer venality Aldrich might have—but of course would not have—chosen his own family's grocer-patriarch of the Ocean State. When Senator Aldrich went to Washington in 1881, he was worth $50,000. Thirty years later, having engaged in no business but politics, that figure was $12 million. Bribery, apologizes his grandson, was an accepted practice when today's "old money" was new.

In attempting to draw boundaries using dates of accession, Aldrich fails at his second project: weighing the success of "old money" as a social force. The difference, Aldrich perceives in the agnostic dimness of his Northeastern Republicanism, is ultimately intangible. "Patricians . . . know that life is never so fair, so meritocratic, as the entrepreneur would have it. . . . But it is in their interest to know, too, that while this unfairness can be ameliorated, preferably by them, it cannot be undone." They know this even as grocers, for what Aldrich speaks of is the natural aristocrat—this time without quotation marks. For such aristocrats, who, as Russell Kirk has written, stand out in whichever human subgroup they find themselves, money is incidental. When present, however and whenever obtained, it is a vehicle for great deeds. But when money is absent, the deeds go on. The natural aristocrat performs dramas of heroic proportions whatever the size of his stage.

I refer to "*agnostic* dimness" because the remarkable thing about Aldrich's argument, and the root of its confusion, is its Godlessness. The name of the Deity appears three times in the book, first in a joke, next in a child's sentimental prayer, and finally, in a eulogy, as the essence of "the wind and the weather, the line of the shore—things one couldn't do anything about." Considering that his argument, and the social hierarchy it defends, are medieval, God should be writ large. God is the ill-defined source of strength in Aldrich's *pietas*; God's law, as they understood it, inspired the earlier American aristocrats to acts of splendid generosity; God's grace (which Aldrich obscures by the generality "life") set apart rich from poor. Without Him, Aldrich's claim of "old money" superiority is at best mysticism, at worst arrogance.

It would be best to ask a theologian how the natural aristocrat subject to God differs from the vegetative aristocrat of Aldrich's vision, an aristocrat to whom things simply happen and whose authority is his pocketbook. By way of summary, it is perhaps sufficient to say, using paradox in the manner of Chesterton, that the one retains his free will by losing it, while the other loses everything. For the Godless aristocrat of pure wealth, be his justification "old money" or "new," cuts himself loose from the chain of being, from the Augustinian scheme of earthly existence that justifies—and ennobles—inequality by placing God at its apex. To God we are all unequal, yet by Him equally beloved.

Late in *Old Money*, Aldrich reprints word-for-word a touching address that he delivered at the funeral of his father. Nelson W. Aldrich (1911-1986) was an architect, a painter and, between times, trustee of Boston institutions public, private, educational, cultural. "He thought it was the task of one's life," said his only son, "to make the most of whatever one had. . . . He was blessed, and knew it. Indeed, there were times—when you were nearby, for example—when he felt he could bless." If the late Aldrich was really like that, he was living proof why the poor hate the rich. They hate them for refusing to be humble. By accepting only so much of the medieval argument as is convenient, the rich pervert the myth that is their legitimacy. The myth becomes not an expression of wonder but an entangling web of lies, from which "old money" can buy no release.

Enduring Wisdom

by H. Lee Cheek

***The Wise Men Know What Wicked Things Are Written on the Sky* by Russell Kirk, Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway; $17.95.**

Wise Men is a collection of 11 lively essays by the wise old sage who is contemporary conservatism's most able prophet. The Kirk neophyte will find these essays most alluring; it is unusual to experience such an affirmation of the "permanent things" in our current age. The Kirk devotee will find this slim volume to be an encapsulation of a lifetime against the tide of the leveling influences at work in modern thought.

The book is a compilation of public lectures delivered at The Heritage Foundation from 1982-1984; while

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Kirk's lectures are masterpieces in printed form, the reader can easily recognize they were intended for a live audience. Like his previous collection of Heritage lectures, *Reclaiming a Patrimony*, this assemblage has a theme: all is not lost. Departing from the view of his old friend Richard M. Weaver, Kirk holds that in the dark tunnel, some light glimmers, however dim. Through his many seminars at his home in the hamlet of Mecosta, a coterie of former assistants, and lectureships, Kirk has instilled the value of redemption. Even as the weary walls begin to crack, renewal may come. Kirk, like Joad and others, believes the West is growing more decadent day by day, and that we have "lost the object." Our appointed civilizing mission, *fatum*, has exerted less and less influence, and like Rome, our population and prosperity could disappear and frustration would replace national confidence.

In the first three essays in this collection Kirk attempts to offer a vision of hope—specifically, a refining of the idea of America's mission and an examination of the prospects for an American Augustan age. He demonstrates the need to recover this mission, but not as it has been interpreted by the neoconservative forces that abound in the Department of State and in numerous think tanks. Kirk accepts the Boorstinian perspective that the American Constitution cannot be exported, as it grew out of a special intellectual and historical experience. The legions of neoconservatives have made it appear as if conservatives endorse unabashed worldwide plebiscitarian democracy accompanied by a Novakian economic order; Kirk counters by repeating Sir Herbert Butterfield's warning against national self-righteousness —"the cardinal error in diplomacy." The American mission, according to Kirk, is to "reconcile liberty with law." A *Pax Americana* could be produced not by promoting a pale hegemony, but presenting an example of ordered freedom.

Five of the 11 sections deal with educational processes; however, they are too eclectic to be united by an overall theme. The essays range from a seminal essay on the needed coexistence of order and freedom in the university to a rather acerbic attack detailing how computers limit the moral imagination. This reviewer, knowing Kirk's environs well, finds the tone of this particular essay overly stringent, especially since Kirk has succumbed recently to the use of electric typewriters. But the point he makes is important: the Knowledge Society will be replaced by an Information Society and the "tested tools of learning" will be discarded. The panaceas proposed by educationalists all too often become their own worst nightmares.

Russell Kirk's many lectures on virtue, including the one offered in this volume entitled, "Can Virtue Be Taught?" have not gone unnoticed by the able souls attempting to regain the educational high ground. Endeavoring to prove that virtue can be perpetuated, Kirk sides with Aristophanes instead of Socrates. The great hero-poet believed virtue, as the greatness of the soul, could not be acquired by pampering or tutorials, but was a natural phenomenon. The source of virtue, according to this argument, is the family; the recovery of virtue in America depends on our revival of this institution.

The remaining three essays address the problem of the family, the movement towards an age of sentiments and a concluding essay bearing the book's title. Once again Kirk encounters the affliction of decline. Unlike Goethe, Kirk does not believe "the current times are the worst of times" and refuses to submit to the twin vices of servitude and boredom. Kirk elegantly defends the concept of the moral imagination, initially espoused by Edmund Burke in his *Reflections*. Through the moral imagination we realize that we are simply on the shoulders of those generations—part of a "folk chain"—that passed before us; we are, in part, a product of intuition. As the essay notes, ideology is the major obstacle to a revival of the moral imagination. Ideology can be countered, relying in no small part on the American disdain for dogma; three-quarters of a century ago Santayana wrote that it would take much hammering to drive an ideology into America.

Wise Men will serve as a reminder to those of a conservative cast to continue the effort to defend the civil social order against its many enemies. The lectures presented here were given over a broad span of time and there is a good bit of redundancy. Some of Kirk's suggestions concerning education were originally espoused in his *Decadence and Renewal* a decade ago. His frequent references to Newman's concept of the "habit of mind" will also strike some readers as repetitive.

Yet, at the end of the day, *Wise Men* is another valiant effort by Kirk to help us bring ourselves out of our current disorder and "refute the prophecies of decadence."

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Princelings of Peace

by William R. Hawkins

***Peace & Revolution: The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism* by Guenter Lewy, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.**

"While at one time pacifists were single-mindedly devoted to the principles of nonviolence and reconciliation, today most pacifist groups defend the moral legitimacy of armed struggle and guerrilla warfare, and they praise and support the communist regimes emerging from such conflicts." This is the thesis of Guenter Lewy's study of the most enduring and successful segment of the radical left, the so-called "peace movement." Lewy concentrates on four organizations: the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC, founded 1917), the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR, founded 1914), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF, founded 1915), and the War Resisters League (WRL, founded 1923). By examining Old Left groups, Lewy chronicles how the New Left gained power during the 1960's and how it has held it ever since.

Lewy presents a large cast of characters, but if one stands out it is Stewart Meacham, a one-time Presbyterian minister who joined the AFSC in the 1950's and headed its peace education division during the Vietnam War. The AFSC had decided in the early 1930's not to join Communist front groups or allow their officers to lend their names

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For Mei Lin, On Our Twenty-Second Wedding Anniversary

by Frederick Turner

When you were twenty-two a messenger,
Who said a king had sent him, came to you,
Set in your hands a book before you were
Ready to answer him, what you would do;

And said the book was strange as it was rare,
And she that opened it must first be sure
Of her heart, to live what was written there,
Or else the king would die that very hour;

And that the book must faithfully each day
Be tended with pure water and with light,
Its chamber swept with brooms lest it decay,
Its virtue vanish in the shades of night.

Twenty-two years, my love, not knowing if
The messenger told truth or told a lie,
You kept the book in honor, as a wife
Might keep a husband; lest the king should die,

You never opened up a single page,
Uncertain of your heart, if it were true;
Patient beyond your youth, beyond your age,
You will yet wait another twenty-two.

Texas Rainbow

Solemn, unbent, an arch of rays,
A rigid shaft of curvature
So perfect, yet so dim upon the air,
Has purified the haze

And given all its pointed light,
Its wink and tinctured shimmerings
To edge and sharpen out these earthly things
In a sneeze of delight.

Our life's a mother-liquid, and
Its solute and its golden leaven
Falls from the fading sacrifice of heaven
Over the greenbright land.

to movements "whose ultimate objectives are short of the universal and religious ones" pursued by the AFSC. In 1962 Meacham signed a declaration to the World Peace Council that disassociated the American peace movement from the government-sponsored "peace groups" of the Soviet bloc.

However, by 1967 Meacham was calling on pacifists to "relate constructively" to revolutionary struggles and to find ways to respond when the US attempted "by violence to suppress a revolutionary struggle," as in Vietnam. A year later, Meacham was in North Vietnam and returned convinced that Hanoi "is in fact a decent government" that would respect South Vietnam's autonomy after reunification, would maintain "a mixed economy focused on the needs of the people," and would pose no threat to its neighbors. He believed the claim of Hanoi's prime minister, Pham Van Dong, that "we fight well because we believe in decency and humanity of all people." Meacham was also on the steering committee of the National Antiwar Conference (July 1969), along with leaders of the Communist Party USA and the Socialist Worker's Party, and was a cochairman of the New Mobilization to End the War. The "New Mobe" was a group based on the "non-exclusion principle," which was the new term for a united front between pacifists and the hard left, including those affiliated with Soviet front groups and those who openly worked not for peace but for the military victory of the Communists.

When in 1975 questions were raised about the establishment of concentration camps and the suppression of religion by the victorious Communists, Meacham denounced such concerns as "support of the imperialists in our land against whom we once joined hands in common struggle." He went on to claim:

> Our Vietnamese friends have displayed both grace and courage in a prolonged, bitter and successful struggle, and now they are seeking to heal the wounds of war, restore their ravaged land and move ahead to a just and confident society. We ought to remember our debt to them and do what we can to help.

A trip to Vietnam in 1977 only confirmed Meacham's convictions about the Communist regime. One of Meacham's colleagues on the trip, Wallace Collett, a businessman who was chairman of the AFSC board of directors, even compared the lives of those who were forcibly exiled to the jungle gulags (euphemistically called "new economic zones") to America's pioneer families building new communities on the frontier. The word "humane" could not be used often enough in the reports issued by the AFSC about Vietnamese "socialism."

The same process was repeated by the other groups studied. As late as 1966, the WILPF executive committee could vote not to endorse the "International War Crimes Tribunal" set up by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, because only allegations made against Washington and Saigon would be tried. But by 1968 the WILPF policy committee was stating that "[w]e can never condone wrongdoing by any nation, but neither can we equate our military action in Vietnam with the actions of the North Vietnamese or the NLF." The Communist cause was just, whereas the American cause was not. At the 1970 WILPF annual meeting, President Katherine Camp condemned the US as the chief evil in the world:

> It is exploitation by uncontrolled economic enterprise and the planned-for deprivation of the unequal. It is the anti-human attitude which has forged a world-wide anti-communist military alliance and which supplies most of the nations of the world with the machinery of death, in defiance of mankind's best hope for peace, the U.N. It encourages the growing number of military dictatorships throughout the world. Its logical conclusions are apartheid, genocide and war.

At WRL, David Dellinger was asking whether it was not possible "to look approvingly on the struggle of the National Liberation Front without endorsing or applauding its violence." Instead of adopting a "plague on both your houses" view, he argued, pacifists should

> . . . step up the tempo of our

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> nonviolent action here in the United States, to try to stop American aggression at its source rather than leave the whole burden on those who suffer its impact.

At FOR the executive secretary, Alfred Hassler, was pushed out after the national council voted to make the People's Peace Treaty the basis for ending the war. That treaty was a document drawn up in Hanoi, and called for an unconditional American withdrawal and the installation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government in Saigon.

The insistance on an immediate American withdrawal, followed by the demand that all aid to the South Vietnamese be ended, was the device for reconciling pacifists with procommunists. Everyone knew that "peace" based on the premise that only the anticommunist side would be prevented from fighting was the same as a policy favoring a Communist victory. Its advantage was that such a policy could be stated in traditional pacifist terms, as opposition to war-making. This is a time-tested formula being used today in the debate over Central American policy and the nuclear arms race.

The large-scale exodus of boat people from Indochina, the deployment of Soviet bombers and warships to Vietnamese bases, and the genocide and continuing war in Cambodia have done nothing to disillusion the AFSC or the other groups on the righteousness of the "revolutionary struggle" in Southeast Asia or elsewhere in the Third World. Revolution, however, must always be defined in leftist terms. Anticommunist guerrilla movements, as in Angola and Nicaragua, are obviously only bands of reactionaries and mercenaries in the employ of imperialists. Even the Afghan resistance against foreign invasion is outside acceptable limits because it is part of the East-West struggle.

Though the AFSC has condemned Moscow for invading Afghanistan, it has also attacked the Afghan resistance as a collection of landlords and tribal chiefs opposed to land reform and social change, and further tainted by the aid received from the CIA. The AFSC has also sought to justify the Soviet invasion. One AFSC pamphlet cited by Lewy states: "From a Soviet perspective, it may have occurred to them that the U.S. might have been tempted to seize a destabilized Afghanistan and turn it into a new listening post on Russia's southern border." The WILPF only finds the Soviet invasion "regrettable," and notes "the Soviet interest in having close relations with a neighboring country." Aid to the Afghan guerrillas is to be opposed because it merely fuels the global US-Soviet confrontation, for which the US is primarily to blame.

In 1981, the AFSC disarmament program published a pamphlet falsely claiming that the USSR had "virtually no power projection forces," whereas the US was "the only nation capable of projecting and sustaining its power by military force globally." This made the US the real threat to peace in the world. The pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Soviet Threat and National Security* also dismissed the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe as being the natural result of "two German invasions," while Moscow's support to help "Third World nations throw off their yoke of colonialism and neocolonialism" was praised.

Lewy's history, based on an extensive investigation of the official records and publications of the AFSC at their national headquarters in Philadelphia and of the FOR, WILPF, and WRL at the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, is full of revealing quotations and the sordid details of the alliance between pacifism and America's enemies—what in a more frank and healthy period would be branded treason. However, his attempt to draw a clear line at the Vietnam War between an authentic pacifism and a new radical creed that merely uses pacifism as a device to seize the high moral ground in political struggles is too neat. He also accords the old pacifism too much credit as a noble exercise in idealism. At one point Lewy even claims that:

> Pacifists, committed to the supreme value of nonviolence, remind the rest of us who are not pacifists of the link between means and ends. Their personal "No" to killing carries an important ethical message. The pacifist vision of a world free of the threat of war can help build support for the development of an ordered political community at the international level able to resolve conflicts peacefully and justly.

This is an exercise in wishful thinking. None of Lewy's four groups deserve any praise for their "idealism," even when one goes back to their very beginnings. These groups were on the wrong side from the start. This is why the New Left found it so easy to gain control of them. All four groups were founded during or immediately after World War I. The war shattered both the liberal faith in natural progress and America's isolation from global power politics. The resulting intellectual turmoil provided an opening for radicals. The dominant world view of the founding generation was fashioned by the philosophy of socialism. As Lewy himself states in his first chapter:

> The pacifist organizations that were founded during and after World War I included a strong core of socialists, and all pacifists stressed the importance of opposing the imperialism of the capitalistic order, of ending the arms race and achieving economic and social justice in order to remove what they considered to be the ultimate causes of war.

A.J. Muste, a Protestant minister who was a leader of FOR from 1926-1929 and again from 1940-1953 (during the period between he worked with the Trotskyist American Workers Party), argued in a 1928 pamphlet that the capitalist status quo was by its nature violent and thus pacifists had to be revolutionaries. Only by ending capitalism could violence be ended. This same line has become commonplace. For example, in an AFSC pamphlet written 44 years later, James Bristol, a former Lutheran pastor, claimed: "While two wrongs never make a right, before we deplore terrorism it is essential for us to recognize fully and clearly whose terrorism came first, so that we can assess what is cause and what is effect."

At the core of the entire peace movement is the Leninist theorem that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, and thus capitalism is the principal cause of war. It is true, of course, that capitalist states have used military force to expand as well as to protect

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their territories and interests; and even true in a larger sense that capitalism is one of the factors that have provided Western civilization with its dynamism over the last 500 years. But neither capitalism as an economic system nor the West as a civilization has been unique in this respect. World history is largely military history, from the dawn of time until the present day. All societies of any scope or duration have made recourse to the sword. This is why pure pacifism has traditionally been dismissed as hopelessly naive.

But the modern union of socialism and pacifism has had profound policy consequences. The evenhandedness of the old pacifism was based on the view that all wars were conflicts between rival camps of capitalist-imperialists, and thus both sides were to be condemned. In 1939 all four of Lewy's groups could join with other antiwar organizations to issue a book, *How to Keep America Out of the War*, which argued that the war against Hitler was "not a war between democracy and totalitarianism, but a death grapple between rival imperialists, with aggressors arrayed against oppressors." Britain and France were merely status quo empires attempting to defend their ill-gotten gains. Both sides were depicted as tools of financial barons.

However, now that America's enemies are no longer other "capitalist" members of Western civilization, but avowed opponents of capitalism (the Soviet bloc) or anti-Western regimes (the Third World), evenhandedness no longer applies. The opposing camps are no longer moral equivalents. Capitalist America is seen as the moral inferior. Thus when Lewy concludes that "[s]ince pacifists do not want to use force in the defense of the society in which they live, they argue that American democracy is not worth defending," he has it backwards. The left decided that America was not worth defending first. It is now using nonviolence as a moral argument to undermine America's survival.

In the US this line of attack against capitalism has proven much more effective than any straight presentation of socialist doctrine. The "children of affluence" have been most susceptible to this doctrine. The peace movement tells them that any system must be oppressive that links rights with duties and that requires discipline and sacrifice to support the continued provision of material goods and personal advancement. And when they violate traditional norms of conduct and shirk their patriotic responsibilities, the peace movement is there to soothe their consciences with false moralizing.

Lewy's book is a valuable study of the most notorious actions of the modern peace movement and a grim warning of where that movement wants to lead America. But if the movement is to be stopped, it must be combated on an even deeper level. The old pacifism as well as the new radicalism must be exposed as a creed unworthy of any respect or consideration.

William R. Hawkins is director of the Foundation for American Ideals.

Opposing the Disneyfiers

by H.W. Crocker III

***Thank God for the Atom Bomb and Other Essays* by Paul Fussell, New York: Summit Books.**

Paul Fussell's enemies are "habitual euphemizers, professional dissimulators," and the "Disneyfiers of life." He is in favor of *cojones*, which is why he ends up in one of his essays liking the Indy 500 in spite of himself, comparing it favorably to the violence of the Falklands War, which is going on while he watches the cars racing past him.

Fussell's favorite word is, perhaps, "irony." He believes in bravery, and yet he realizes what bravery stems from and what it demands. He remembers James Jones and Willie Morris touring the battlefield at Antietam with their sons. One of the boys asked why the men had killed each other there, to which Jones responded that they did it "because they didn't want to appear unmanly in front of their friends." Fussell comments: "Considering the constant fresh supply of young men and the universal young man's need for assurance of his manhood, Jones's answer suggests why reason, decency, and common sense are as unlikely to stop the killing in the future as in the past. Animals and trees and stones cannot be satirized, only human beings, and that's the reason it's all going to happen again, and again, and again, and again." That is tragic, but for Fussell that is no reason to condemn the manly virtues. He is opposed to "humorless critical doctrinaires with grievances (Marxist, Feminist, what have you)," for the very good reason that he is not a utopian. Fussell believes in honesty, in complexity, and in the reality of human life.

The three best essays in this excellent collection are the title essay and its two supporting ones: "An Exchange of Views" (with Michael Walzer), and the horrifying and salutary "Postscript (1987) on Japanese Skulls." Each of these essays cuts through obfuscation and cant, and, in "An Exchange of Views," reveals the conflict between two sensibilities that Fussell designates

> as, on the one hand, the ironic and ambiguous (or even the tragic, if you like), and, on the other, the certain. The one complicates problems, leaving them messier than before and making you feel terrible. The other solves problems and cleans up the place, making you feel tidy and satisfied. I'd call the one sensibility the literary-artistic-historical, I'd call the other the social-scientific-political. To expect them to agree, or even to perceive the same data, would be expecting too much.

Fussell not only draws a neat and proper distinction, but recognizes the inevitable and irreconcilable conflict between the two visions. And there is no doubting on which side he places himself.

Noting that John Kenneth Galbraith believes that the atom bomb shortened the Pacific war by only two or three weeks, Fussell spells out what those two or three weeks would have meant for the Allies:

> Two weeks more means 14,000 more killed and wounded, three weeks more, 21,000. Those weeks mean the world if you're one of those thousands or related to one of them. During the time between the dropping of the Nagasaki bomb on August 9 and the actual surrender on the fifteenth, the

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war pursued its accustomed course: on the twelfth of August eight captured American fliers were executed (heads chopped off); the fifty-first United States submarine, *Bonefish*, was sunk (all aboard drowned); the destroyer *Callaghan* went down, the seventieth to be sunk, and the Destroyer Escort *Underhill* was lost. That's a bit of what happened in six days of the two or three weeks posited by Galbraith. What did he do in the war? He worked in the Office of Price Administration in Washington. I don't demand that he experience having his ass shot off. I merely note that he didn't.

Fussell did.

Recognizing the true horrors of war as experienced by those actually seeing combat, like the American Marines "sliding under fire down a shell-pocked ridge slimy with mud and liquid dysentery s—t into the maggoty Japanese and USMC corpses at the bottom, vomiting as the maggots burrowed into their own foul clothing," he also unveils the brutality of war in another way. There is a haunting photograph in his "Postscript (1987) on Japanese Skulls" that was given a full page in *Life* magazine during the war. It is of a well-dressed young woman sitting at a desk writing to a loved one in the Pacific while she gazes upon a Japanese skull he has sent her as a memento. The picture is shocking now, but it wasn't shocking then, not because we have changed for the better, but because this was war, *real* war, war truly understood, and this photograph is a pedestrian record of the hatred and brutality that accompanies war and that is too often forgotten by the euphemists, dissimulators, and Disneyfiers. Fussell's discussion of Japanese skulls is not about atrocities, but about truth.

But if war is brutal and obscene, it does not follow that all men who participate in war are made brutal and obscene by it. Fussell's essay on "Modernism, Adversary Culture, and Edmund Blunden," is a marvelous critique, proving the superiority, to my eyes anyway, of the "Moderns"—those who "can embrace the past and not just feel but enjoy its continuity with the present," such as Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, Edwin Muir, Louis MacNeice, Conrad Aiken, Elizabeth Bishop, and Edmund Blunden—to the destructive "Modernists"—a category that encompasses, in various ways, Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf, T.E. Hulme, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, e.e. cummings, Wyndham Lewis, Ezra

REVISIONS

Realni Socialismus

Josef Škvorecký, professor of American literature at the University of Toronto, expatriate Czech novelist, one-time jazz saxophonist, survivor of two lethal dictatorships and several childhood diseases, casualty of the "Prague Spring," and an immigrant much at pains not to offend the Canadian anti-anticommunist establishment, reminds us that utopias may be unavoidable, but that smiling, lissome young women can do much to make us forget that.

In his collection of essays, *Talking Moscow Blues* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys), Škvorecký never lets us forget that he's a Bohemian. The Czechs, once a Slav warrior people of Jan Hus and Jan Ziska fame, fought their last armed battle in 1620, when the Habsburgs took over their country, their name, and their history.

Since then, their way of standing up to the world has been unique: the Good Soldier Švejk (in the West often inexplicably Germanized to Schweik), created by beer-swilling Jaroslav Hašek, laughed at both the German and the Russian vision of the Glorious Past, the Glorious Present, and the Glorious Future. "When I suggested to the lady censor," writes Škvorecký of his own Švejkianism ("I Was Born in Nachod"), "that I could replace it [the lewd non-word 'bosom'] by 'tits', as that was what the working people called it, she threw me out of her office."

Never one to miss a good comparison, Škvorecký points to the strange similarity between Nazism (which he experienced as a teenager) and communism (which he had to endure and flee as a mature writer). His "Two Peas in a Pod" recalls the convergence of Nazi and Communist marching songs of the late 20's. (*Sprung auf die Barikaden, der Tod/ besiegt uns nur, jar nur!/ Wir sind die Sturmkolonnen der Hitlerdiktatur*! sang the SA, to *Sprung auf die Barikaden, heraus zum/ Buergerkrieg, ja Krieg!/ Planzt auf die Sowjetfahnen zum blutig-roten Sief*! sung by the Communists.)

For a laughing Czech, however, Škvorecký exhibits little patience when he asks, "Are Canadians Politically Naive?" In "Natasa and the Peacemakers," he answers by recounting the true story of Natasa Bayerova, a Czech tourist translator denounced to the Communist authorities by a Canadian student "peace delegation." (Ever ready to sacrifice for the revolution, the Canadians found Natasa's views of *realni socialismus* potentially damaging to the "good relations between the two countries.") Bayerova, fortunately, managed to escape to the West—no thanks to Canadian peacenik Ronnie Evanoff, or Michael Lucas, the Bohemia-born president of the Canada-USSR Association, who repeatedly sent information to the Czech police.

Canadians (and indeed many Americans) *are* politically naive. Yet as Škvorecký so aptly points out, an ideological solution to this condition is bound to produce cures that are much worse than the disease. Pollution, racism, social and ethnic strife *are* ills, and young people especially *do* need a framework for their idealism and their yearning for heroism, but creating a synthetic, unfalsified consciousness is a problem yet to be solved by mere humans. (MS)

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Pound, and Edith Sitwell.

Blunden served in the Royal Sussex Regiment during the Great War, surviving two years at the front and winning the Military Cross for bravery. He endured and suffered as much as his fellow "war poets," but Blunden, unlike many of the others who fell into bitterness, admired both his battalion commander and his wartime sergeant. Moreover, he remained a patriot, did not excoriate the past, and, most characteristic of all, he eschewed "adversary utterance or persuasion, either to advance his critical views, to object publicly to those advanced by others, or to aggrandize his particular kind of poetry." Here we have perhaps the profoundest irony of all, making Blunden especially interesting for Fussell—the portrait of a man who, having experienced the disjunctive horror of the Great War, and having understood it, still managed to maintain the decorum of and a feeling of continuity with the past. Like Paul Fussell, Edmund Blunden was not one "to turn from the humane and the empirical and the difficult to the doctrinaire and the facile," and for that reason alone, we can thank God for both of them.

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The House of David

by David Moltke-Hansen

***Major Butler's Legacy: Five Generations of a Slaveholding Family* by Malcolm Bell Jr., Athens: University of Georgia Press.**

Descent from a Founding Father is a matter for celebration to thousands of sons and daughters of the American Revolution and members of the Cincinnati Society, Colonial Wars, First Families, and other sufficiently remote or proud groups. Americans are eager to claim, when they can, ancestry made noble by history if not by "blood."

The sad irony is that the scholars examining the histories of "founding" families have again and again traced a story marred by conflict, profligacy, and incompetence even when highlighted as well by brilliance, self-sacrifice, and accomplishment. The Adams family is a well-known example, though similar cases had been noted by commentators on the Roman imperium and chroniclers of the House of David long before there was a United States.

In his history of the family of Major Pierce Butler, Malcolm Bell Jr. has given another case in point. This traditional story of pride brought low and a fortune disputed and dissipated over generations is more than a family chronicle, however. Bell has used it to tell the story of slavery, its demise, and aftermath in the United States. Bell's protagonist, Butler, an impecunious younger son of an Irish baronet, married on the eve of the American Revolution into a wealthy South Carolina family with large holdings of plantations and slaves. When serving his adopted state at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, he was instrumental in shaping the clauses protecting slavery.

Within two generations, the major's wealth in slaves had been largely dissipated by a spendthrift grandson, but not before it had been the cause of serious family discord. First the major's children fought over their father's will. Then British actress Fanny Kemble, wife of the major's namesake and grandson, published in her journals her revulsion to her husband's slaveholding. In turn, these became a major weapon in abolitionist hands as well as in the Kemble-Butler divorce of 1849.

Two generations later still, novelist Owen Wister, author of that American classic *The Virginian* and grandson of Pierce Butler and Fanny Kemble, implicitly took issue with his grandmother's perceptions of the planter tradition into which she had married with such unhappy consequences. In his second novel, *Lady Baltimore*, set in a disguised Charleston, he characterized the former slave owners as admirable in many respects and chastised Northerners. On reading his friend's book, Teddy Roosevelt complained to Wister, "[you] made your swine devils practically all Northerners, and your angels practically all Southerners." Wister was vehement that he was not

BOOKS IN BRIEF

***Roman Slave Law* by Alan Watson; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 157 pp.** Alan Watson is one of the best living writers on ancient law, and this brief book on slave law is one of the best comparative studies of what is mistakenly called the South's peculiar institution. Watson's book is not so much designed to be read by specialists in Roman law as by ordinary readers interested in the American experience of slavery. Some Southern historians might quibble with Watson's suggestion that where American slave law differed significantly from Roman law it was owing to Southern racism, but his book is still an important contribution to comparative jurisprudence.

***Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Rome* by Zvi Yavetz; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 205 pp.** Yavetz, a distinguished Israeli ancient historian, has provided the reader with an important set of original texts (in translation) that might well be read in conjunction with Watson's *Roman Slave Law*. This is a useful compendium of sources that might have been even more useful if Yavetz had not incorporated the translations of the Loeb series wherever they were available. The book is concluded with a valuable survey of the issues and academic debates that surround the issue of ancient slavery.

***Violent Origins: Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* by Walter Burkert, Rene Girard, and Jonathan G. Smith; edited by Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 275 pp.** Like most volumes based on a symposium, *Violent Origins* is of uneven merit. Walter Burkert displays his usual intelligence and erudition. Even when he steps outside his own field of ancient religion, he manages to explode the fanciful interpretations of Rene Girard—a literary critic, for all his pretensions to philosophy. Nonetheless, the book taken as a whole is an important step toward, if not a consensus, at least a convergence of opinion on the role of ritual killing in cultural development.

***Early Christian Art & Architecture* by Robert Milburn; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 318 pp.** This clearly illustrated volume includes all the famous sites—Ravenna, Byzantium, Rome—but also expands our horizons by surveying the length and breadth of the ancient world, from the Balkans to North Africa. Scholars, ministers, and Christian readers should all make an effort to acquire this lucid and comprehensive book.

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betraying his abolitionist heritage, but it could be said that he was honoring Major Butler's legacy—a legacy not only of wealth, but of conflict.

Bell's tracing of that legacy is artful in its weaving of the fortunes of the family and slavery. Yet one must recognize that this big book of nearly 700 pages tells and analyzes only part of the story.

There is more to the Butlers than either the overbearing pride that forced children to rebel against parents, or the relationships with and ownership of slaves. Major Butler played an important role in the development of cotton culture and, so, the spread of plantation agriculture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He was a politician of rank and vigor who presumably addressed other questions than slavery. His kinship networks united and defined interests and attitudes in telling and hitherto little-considered ways. In concentrating on slavery, Bell has sometimes noted these facts in vivid detail, but he has not analyzed them or explored some of their ramifications in enough depth.

To view the Butlers through the prism of slavery is to give focus to a sprawling story. At the same time, it necessarily limits and distorts the story. Major Butler's legacy was more complex than even the vexatious slavery issue.

Bell's themes and emphases are those of another Georgian, Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, who called slavery and race the "Central Theme of Southern History" in an influential article which appeared in the *American Historical Review* 60 years ago. Bell's book does not so much support as assume Phillips' argument to relate a remote, if often dramatic and important, family history to the preoccupations and assumptions of the late 20th century. This he has done so well that you almost forget to note how exceptional the Butlers were in their connections and behavior as well as wealth and slaveholdings.

The Butler drama is compelling, less for its moral import than for its scope and players—from George Washington to Henry James. Clearly, in this year of the bicentennial of South Carolina's ratification of the US Constitution, such family links to the Founding Fathers claim our attention. The chain may be tarnished, but it is vital.

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The Dinosaur

by James L. Sauer

***Present Concerns* by C.S. Lewis, edited by Walter Hooper, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.**

Lewis was fond of referring to himself as an Old Western Man, one of a soon-to-be-extinct species: a veritable dinosaur. As a classically educated member of the Anglo-Irish middle class, one born at the turn of the century, his opinions to most modernists must certainly appear Paleolithic. He was not a political man, seldom read the papers, and thought Tito was king of Greece. His political opinions, when he did express them, might be labeled "cottage conservatism." His was a pure rightism born of political ignorance and a rightly ordered heart. His private life at the Kilns, with brother and friends, reflected the highest order of conservative living: oblivious privacy, personal piety, and intermittent intellectual warfare with "principalities and powers." These essays reflect those few times when the dinosaur made war with modernism: Oxfordius Rex versus Mecha-Godzilla.

The left has already started to pull the Old Thing down. At a recent conference at Seattle and Seattle Pacific Universities celebrating the achievement of Lewis and Chesterton, Walter Hooper, Lewis's literary executor, humorously recounted the latest ideological method of Lewis criticism called "snapping." (Hugo Dyson, apparently, first labeled this little game of ideological tag, based on a children's card game in which one calls "snap" when the appropriate card is displayed.) The liberal critic now walks through C.S. Lewis's work and cries out his impassioned "snaps" at the slightest sighting of out-of-favor opinions.

"Snap," the dinosaur is no pacifist: "We know from the experience of the last 20 years that a terrified and angry pacifism is one of the roads that lead to war." Maybe it was an aberration. Afraid not, "snap," his opinions on nuclear war are even worse: "If we are going to be destroyed by the atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs."

"Snap" again, the old fuddy-duddy is insensitive to feminism: "This is the tragi-comedy of the modern woman: taught by Freud to consider the act of love the most important thing in life, and then inhibited by feminism from that internal surrender which alone can make it a complete emotional success."

"Snap," Lewis is a democrat, but for the wrong reasons: "I am a democrat because I believe in the Fall of Man . . . Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters."

"Snap, snap, snap, snap . . . " the game goes on.

Unlike the *Abolition of Man*, this book is not a sustained treatment of ideas. Nor is the collection representative of his best work. The ideological "snappers," on the other hand, will find something to snap about on almost any page. The dinosaur, though dead, is still dangerous; even when he twitches a modernist rodent dies.

Lewis was in vogue for a period with Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals, and he still has friends there. Expect him to get increasingly short shrift, however, from the journalistic and academic vermin scampering round his literary corpse.

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Why Italy Runs

by E. Christian Kopff

***Democracy Italian Style* by Joseph LaPalombara, New Haven: Yale University Press.**

Americans find Italy a paradox. We love vacationing in a country with such delicious food, friendly people, and so many historical and cultural monuments. Its politics, however, bother us.

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After 20 years of one party rule, from 1923-43, it seemed to rebound into virtual chaos. There have been 46 governments since World War II, not to mention the terrorism of the past two decades. Yale Professor Joseph LaPalombara has written *Democracy Italian Style* to remind us that Italy is a real success story.

Far from being chaotic, Italy's government is too stable. One party, the Catholic Christian Democrats, has dominated every government since the war, and the first eight governments were headed by one man, Alcide De Gasperi, Italy's Adenauer. Three men have been prime minister for ten of the past 15 years. When not heading the government, they are still in the cabinet, providing continuity and experience.

Italy's politics do not fit into our vision of a perfect state. We believe in the separation of church and state. Their most powerful party is Catholic. We are anticommunist and Italy's No. 2 party is Communist. Over the past two decades we have been treated to predictions of right-wing coups and the Communists' overtaking the Christian Democrats in the vote. Yet the percentages of the Italian vote are pretty much what they were 30 years ago. Italy is a secure and stable country with a relatively prosperous economy.

Although LaPalombara defends the success of the Italian political class, he has sharp words for the Italian intelligentsia. This comes out most clearly in his chapter on terrorism, which almost broke the Italian democracy during the 1970's. The violence and villainy of the Red Brigades and other terrorists were encouraged by irresponsible negativity. The great novelist Leonardo Sciascia could proclaim, "I stand neither with the state nor with the Red Brigades," at a time of literally daily killings and maimings. LaPalombara's clear *j'accuse* launched against the Italian intellectuals who supported terrorism in their nation's worst hours is eloquent and courageous.

But at times LaPalombara gets carried away. To describe Italy's massive tax evasion as "democratic" is silly, especially since he believes that Italy's deficit would disappear if everyone paid up. (Most people think that overtaxation is the root of the problem.) LaPalombara not only praises Italy's political class, but also its *partitocrazia*, the rule of the parties. I cannot go along with this. If Italy had a law that a party needed 5 percent of the vote to get into Parliament, there would be only four parties there, instead of ten. (If the cut-off point were 10 percent, there would be only three parties, and the Socialists have climbed to over 10 percent only in the last few years.) As it is, parties with derisory percentages of the vote not only get into Parliament, thus making majorities more difficult, but help to form governments and even furnish prime ministers. Spadolini, whose Republicans were lucky to get 3 percent of the vote, got himself, with Socialist connivance, appointed head of two governments for nearly two years—a mockery of democracy. The serious problem with corruption in Italy is partly due to the parties' blatant misuse of the spoils system.

LaPalombara has a few well-chosen words on Marco Panella and his Radicals, publicity hounds for whose antics Americans often fall, but his admiration for Socialist Bettino Craxi seems to me excessive. Italy survived the near-catastrophe of the 70's because of Giulio Andreotti's leadership during the crucial years 1976-79. Terrorism met its most important defeats then, the economy was put on a stable base, and the growing support for communism was turned around. Craxi's hysterical jealousy of Andreotti is one of his less admirable traits, along with his poor responses to the Moro kidnapping and the Achille Lauro affair, when he allowed the mastermind of the atrocity to walk out of Italy.

Luigi Barzini's *The Italians* (1964) is still the best introduction to Italy for the average American. Frederic Spotts and Theodor Wieser's *Italy: A Difficult Democracy* (1986) is a clearer presentation of the most important facts (except on terrorism, where LaPalombara is far better). American readers who know something of Italy will be grateful to Joseph LaPalombara for giving us a lively and factual account of why Italian democracy, so far from being the Sick Man of Europe, is alive and kicking.

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Interpreting Burke

by Joe Pappin III

***Edmund Burke: Prescription & Providence* by Francis P. Canavan, Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press and the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statemanship and Political Philosophy.**

Father Francis P. Canavan, S.J., with the publication of this his second book on Edmund Burke, clearly establishes himself as one of the most—if not *the* most—able interpreter of Burke's political philosophy. Here Canavan focuses upon topics of enormous import for fathoming Burke's political philosophy, including theological influences on Burke, his religious faith, the relationship of the doctrine of creation to Burke's politics, and the doctrines of prescription and providence, especially as they concern the question of Burke's historicism and relativism.

The last two themes mentioned are the shadow themes which haunt Burke's doctrine of prescription and providence. Canavan's response to attempts to reduce Burke to a historical relativist results in a work that transcends narrow professional concerns, even while it meets foursquare both recently revived and lingering problems in Burke scholarship.

Canavan sets out to support the claim that Burke's political philosophy is developed within the framework of a realist metaphysics shaped by the biblical doctrine of creation, and influenced by Burke's reading of Christian theology. Canavan accomplishes this rather tall order in the first two chapters, consulting a formidable list of theologians, Anglican divines and dissenters alike, who most likely formed Burke's world view. This list includes Richard Hooker, Joseph Butler, Edward Stillingfleet, John Tillotson, and James Foster. Though Protestant, these theologians are neither voluntarists nor nominalists. They hold to creation *ex nihilo*, according to a divine plan, emphasizing the radical contingency of things, and a universe which is essentially intelligible and accessible in its structure to human reason. From this emerges a natural law which is normative for human actions and morality.

The Anglicans held to a teleological view of the universe and history, that

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man was social by nature, that reason had precedence over will, and man could comprehend, within limits, an ordered, intelligible universe. When this view is related to politics and the swirl of revolutionary claims to natural rights, certain conclusions must follow. The French *philosophes* came forward with radical democratic theses, championing individual natural rights and popular sovereignty. Burke's politics came into relief as opposed to such radical views. He rejected out of hand the claims to popular sovereignty, and denied it as an inalienable right. He proclaimed man's place in the continuous unfolding of the nation of which he is a part, and recognized the developmental role history plays in the emergence of society, while affirming a "Human Nature . . . which is always the same," itself the touchstone of morality and politics.

Canavan clarifies as few have done the main focus of Burke's attack on democratic theory, which is its claim to arbitrary will. "In Burke's thought," Canavan argues, "arbitrary will was never legitimate, because will was never superior to reason, not even in the sovereign Lord of the Universe."

It becomes the task of Canavan's last two chapters to demonstrate that in basing so much of his politics on prescription and providence Burke is not succumbing to historicism and relativism. While Burke argues in one place that the "sole authority" of the British constitution is that it has existed "time out of mind," it does not follow that there are no transcendent standards upon which to judge the present order of any society. Prescription cannot turn inherently evil actions that contravene human nature into morally good acts. The historical epoch in which we live in itself is not sufficient to justify acts against nature, as Burke clearly stated in his argument against the bogus "geometrical morality" exercised by Hastings in India.

Burke writes in his *Correspondence* (concerning the apparent success of the French Revolution) that to continue resisting a revolution that providence has permitted to succeed appears to be "perverse and obstinate." For some scholars this amounts to justifying the revolution and giving approval to a new moral order, thus condemning Burke to relativism.

Canavan answers by first clarifying what Burke's teaching on providence is, revealing that divine providence is ultimately mysterious; it is reasonable, not arbitrary and irrational; and the "ordinary march of providence" provides the basis for the rules of prudence, which, for Burke, is the first among virtues both political and moral. Canavan argues that for Burke the success of the French Revolution does not indicate God's will that evil should prevail; unknown to the human mind, the revolution's success may play a role in God's design which remains to be revealed. All that Burke may have meant by his remark was that revolution was now a *fait accompli*.

Canavan's researches reveal a Burke who is more than a practical politician —practical, yes; a politician, inescapably; but one whose practical politics is self-consciously nourished by and rooted in a realist metaphysics, a Christian metaphysics.

Of course there are Burke's frequent remarks which disparage metaphysics. After all, can the Burke who informs us that "I never govern myself, no rational man ever did govern himself, by abstractions and universals," embrace a metaphysics? Can he who claims that "Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest, and not on metaphysical speculations," actually avoid relativism? Or he who purports that "Metaphysics cannot live without definition; but Prudence is cautious how she defines," be a friend of Aristotle or Aquinas?

It is obvious to any attentive reader of Burke that the metaphysics and metaphysicians Burke rails against are rationalists, or empiricists utilizing deductive arguments, both epitomized by the French *philosophes* who arbitrarily imposed their deductive reasoning upon a complex and recalcitrant reality. In fact, he grounds his refutation of them on the metaphysics of Aristotle, as Burke pointedly remarks in the *Reflections*: "The troll of their categorical table might have informed them [the French *philosophes* and levellers] that there was something else besides *substance* and *quantity*. They might learn from the catechism of metaphysics that there were eight heads more in every complex deliberation which they have never thought of . . . " This should not be surprising from one who refers to Aristotle as the "great master of reasoning."

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No Hope for the Homeless

by Dan McMurry

***The Homeless in Contemporary Society*, edited by Richard D. Bingham, Roy E. Green, and Sammis B. White, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.**

This book is a 272-page inventory of Mother Hubbard's cupboard. Almost without exception, the contributed articles treat the homeless as some vague, faceless group, far distant from the authors' time and place. There is not even the degree of passion an astronomer brings to the study of Jupiter's rings. You get the feeling that you are reading about amoebae. Worse, many of the authors are condescending.

Yet this book is important because it is one of the first books on the homeless the academic community has done for the general readership. As such it is designed to guide politicians and planners in the support of rational policies. With the decisions every large American community is now facing concerning the fate of the homeless, the need for reliable information and realistic guides for planning is crucial. It is lamentable that this volume does not provide either.

The book consists of 15 articles which are divided into two sections, seven on "understanding homelessness" and eight concerning "policy and program options." The articles in the first section are intended to be objective descriptions. They are so vague and "arm-chairish," however, that they tend to mislead rather than inform. In some pieces there is not enough information given even to mislead. These sentences are typical:

> A home has several functions. Home is a place where one can rest and sleep, wash and change clothing.
>
> A home of one's own is a

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place where one can keep one's furniture and other possessions.

Homelessness is life without one's own home.

The articles in the policy and program section provide even less guidance than the "descriptive" pieces. Their authors are either urban planners, housing authorities, architects, or politicians. Hence there is no discussion of deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, alcoholism, or family dissolution—all major issues in homelessness.

The policy section is much too general and theoretical to serve as a guide for decision makers. Nevertheless, the book appears to have an ideological perspective. The homeless, according to this assumption, are in their wretched state primarily because of the dearth of "affordable housing," and the lack of said housing is due to current administration policies.

Two quotations illustrate this particular view. "As long as the distribution of shelter security remains tied to income and social class, the poor will bear the burden of going homeless," writes one contributor. This cannot be of much help to communities earnestly seeking solutions to the homeless problem but which are dedicated to a democratic and capitalistic approach. Can you imagine "shelter security" (apartments? houses?) *not* being tied to income in America? Otherwise, our economic system collapses.

The other quotation is from Mario Cuomo, governor of New York: "If we are to keep our economy strong and our nation powerful . . . we must begin to see that regarding America as a community is not some grandiose ideal . . . In New York we have tried to do this, not only in tending to the needs of the homeless, but in taking on all challenges that government faces—from education to AIDS." This is rhetoric, and aside from being optimistic it offers little help with the massive problems New York and the rest of the country face. New York City has the largest population of street people in the nation. It pays unbelievably large sums to keep the "welfare hotels" full, has half of all the AIDS patients in the world, and a troubled education system. The authors should have looked at Cuomo's track record before they entered him in the race. Homelessness is much too serious a problem to leave to the trivializations of political pundits.

Dan McMurry is associate professor of sociology at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro.

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Worshiping the Golden Self

by Haven Bradford Gow

***Man and Mind: A Christian Theory of Personality*, edited by Thomas Burke, Hillsdale, MI: Hillsdale College Press.**

Are religion and psychology enemies or allies? Can religion and psychology peacefully coexist? Can religion and psychology work together for the sake of social progress? *Man and Mind*, an anthology of thought-provoking essays, seeks to provide answers to these questions.

The essayists are united in their conviction that most modern psychologists consider psychology a good secular substitute for religion. New York University professor Paul Vitz contends that modern psychology has, in effect, become a kind of religion, namely, a form of secular humanism based on the worship of the self. In Vitz's measured judgment, "the overriding religious character of so much psychology is its tendency to replace God with the self. Intrinsic human pride and narcissism seem to have found one of their more effective expressions in modern psychology—a discipline that substitutes for the ancient, no longer appealing worship of the Golden Calf what might perhaps be called today's psychological worship of the Golden Self." Many persons, it seems, who never would attempt to confess their sins to a priest in a confessional box now try to achieve a false sense of self-esteem and self-acceptance by confiding their mistakes, secrets, and innermost thoughts to a psychoanalyst, a sex therapist, or members of an "encounter group."

According to William Kirk Kilpatrick of Boston University, psychology is woefully inadequate to help people understand and cope with life. Dr. Kilpatrick observes: "Why isn't secular psychology enough? It offers plausible explanations, good insights, good techniques. It offers very good pills. But it doesn't offer the one thing that people require most: a sense of meaning."

Indeed, it is sad but true that, as Kilpatrick continues, "we can even say that the psychological sciences tend to reduce meaning. One comes away from the psychology textbooks with the feeling that though life now seems more explainable, it somehow seems less meaningful. Everything we thought was of value gets explained away. Symphonies and paintings turn out to be sublimations of the sex drive or productions of the right brain hemisphere. Love turns out to be a matter of stimulus and response or a series of transactions conditioned by family patterns."

Kilpatrick rightly insists that a major problem with secular psychology is that "not only is the noble side of our nature reduced, so is the ignoble side. We are allowed to be neither saints nor sinners because, as it turns out, there is no sin; only synapses."

Certainly one sure sign of a corrupt society is the deification of the self, of one's selfish ego. David Riesman of Harvard maintains that our society is suffering from a decline in national morality as a direct result of our narcissistic preoccupation.

"Egocentrism," he writes, "is now widely peddled as a therapeutic means to encourage self-assertion; and people buy books and attend seminars in

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which they are encouraged to discover and promote their own feelings and wishes—in some manuals and seminars almost as if this were an ideal or goal in life."

Haven Bradford Gow is the Wilbur Foundation literary fellow and lives in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Prayer by Numbers

by Bryce Christensen

The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation **by Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, Berkeley: University of California Press.**

When sociologists look at religion, what do they see? Inevitably, they see statistical clusters of churchgoers sorted through ecclesiastical, geographic, and demographic grids. People who want to assess contemporary social trends in American religion would do well to consult this new volume by Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge. In impressive detail, Stark and Bainbridge document how the ongoing decline of America's "main-line" denominations is fueling the growth of militant sects and novel cults. The authors find "an endless cycle" in which "faith is revived and new faiths born to take the places of those withered denominations that lost their sense of the supernatural. Through secularization, churches reduce their tension with the surrounding sociocultural environment, opening fields for sects and cults to grow and, in turn, themselves to be transformed."

Yet even after acknowledging the general validity of Stark and Bainbridge's pattern, even after noting the accuracy of the specific figures given for, say, the declining Methodists or the ascendant Assemblies of God, many readers will still wonder if overweening faith in sociology is not itself symptomatic of the decline of faith. It was that passionate Christian Soren Kierkegaard who taught us that "a crowd is untruth." As students of crowds, sociologists have not proved Kierkegaard wrong, nor have their techniques brought us closer to God. When the solitary prophet descends from the mountain, his message rarely matches the jottings of the sociologists who stayed behind to survey the people in the valley. If Methodist and Episcopal ministers spent more time in prayer and scripture study and less time consulting with sociologists, fewer of their former parishioners would now call themselves Lutherans, Baptists, and Mormons, and fewer still would be experimenting with the latest Asian cult.

Bryce Christensen is the editor of The Family in America.

Surviving College 101

by Les Csorba III

First Principles: A Primer of Ideas for the College-Bound Student **by Hugh Hewitt, Chicago: Regnery Gateway.**

Hugh Hewitt's *First Principles* is a 125-page manual on how to handle the cacophony of illiberal thought that flourishes in our universities.

Consider the experience of one prominent victim, Amy Carter. The freckle-faced little girl who once stood at the knee of the President of the United States has become a self-described "feminist-socialist" in the ranks of the America-hating campus left. Amy used to worry about nuclear war, but someone at Brown University told her that the CIA is the imminent danger.

How could it happen? Jimmy and Rosalynn certainly bear blame. But the American academy, it seems, must also accept responsibility for how Amy Carter is turning out. After Amy traveled north to Brown, she decided that she was not going to become a scholar, but an activist. "Graduation is not important to me," she announced proudly. So at Brown, where students not too long ago voted to urge the university to store cyanide pills in the event of a nuclear war, Amy was placed on probation for disrupting a board of trustees meeting. At the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Amy prevented other students from signing up with the dreaded CIA.

Hewitt's *First Principles* challenges the monopoly of liberal political, economic, and cultural thought by providing short, biting chapters on relevant campus concerns such as money, government, communism, defense, poverty, race, and God.

To incoming freshmen, Hewitt writes:

> [Y]our mind is about to come under assault. Between now and your graduating from college you will listen to hundreds of voices—the voices of students, professors, and academic advisors. Further input will come from books, periodicals, and news reports. All of these voices will share a common aim: To influence your way of thinking. If even one of them tells you this, I will be surprised. Professors teach for money, but of the many I have known, all have also taken up teaching in the hope of attracting adherents to their views.

Herein lies the beginning of the book's instruction, which assists the incoming freshman in discerning the motivations of certain ideologues. It may help them to *question authority*. Hewitt recounts the time as a graduate student he finally concluded that one of his politics section leaders was a smooth Marxist who didn't announce his particular agenda.

> Hidden agendas are a part of everyday life . . . so roundabout the seller comes, feeding you this morsel and this bit and this piece. Eventually you will have swallowed the whole thing. You may not be able to digest it and you may toss it back. But it will have had the chance to take hold. Vendors of ideas need nothing more than that chance.

Noted Marxist vendors Bertell Ollman and Saul Landau are such shrewd salesmen. Landau, a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, once wrote a friend in Cuba: "I've come to dedicate myself to making propaganda for American socialism." Ollman, who teaches at New York University, has become known for his proud claim that "a correct understanding of Marxism (or any body of scientific truth) leads automatically to its acceptance." In other words, Ollman tells his students,

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"either you understand the science of Marxism as I do, accept it, and apply it, or else see me after class to discuss your learning disability."

Some American history books will "spare little ink on Communism, its nature, or its history in practice," warns Hewitt. Quite. Students may even encounter popular American history texts such as Marxist historian Howard Zinn's A *People's History of the United States*. (Zinn claims that his history text is written from the point of view of the Indians, the slaves, pacifists, and draftdodgers.)

The publishing of *First Principles* comes at a time when the American academy suffers from a number of harmful unintellectual diseases, especially in promoting the myth of "moral equivalence" that Professor Jeane Kirkpatrick has confronted in all its dangerous implications, and in promoting the idea "that it's all relative." If students equip themselves with Hewitt's handy manual and apply the wisdom therein, we might be able to begin again the discussion of how to reopen the minds of our future leaders. With Ms. Carter, it might be too late.

Les Csorba III, executive director of Accuracy in Academia, is executive editor of Campus Report.

Common Sense

by Steven Goldberg

***Feminism and Freedom* by Michael Levin, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.**

Over in my philosophy department they used to shake their heads and smile. They didn't actually pat me on the head or anything; professors don't do that. But they did get a kick out of what they saw as my naiveté. "How sweet," they seemed to think, "that he could really believe that philosophy is, by its nature, impenetrable by the sort of idiocy that has penetrated sociology and anthropology."

Well, it made sense to me. In sociology, the irrelevance of fact is such that over three quarters (*well* over three quarters) of the introductory textbooks can claim, even after more than 50 years of Margaret Mead's vehemently denying she ever said any such thing, that Mead's Tchambuli reversed sex roles. But philosophy doesn't have empirical facts, and so, it seemed to me, any logical equivalent of the made-up fact would be so obviously false that derisive laughter would be philosophy's source of immunity.

It turns out it doesn't work that way. You wouldn't believe the nonsense that some men and women in philosophy, at least in the area of sex-role issues, now take seriously. Most of the nonsense is a sort of Dadaist entwining of confused argument and obsessive concern with bodily functions. It's a little easier to think that this stuff isn't actually taken seriously by the author (even if it is taken seriously by Harvard University Press), than to believe the author or anyone else could confuse it with serious thought. But whether one finds duplicity or stupidity more repugnant is a matter of taste, and ultimately irrelevant. Dumb is dumb.

A sentence created by a third-rate mind and devoid of any real meaning can *sound* meaningful, even profound, particularly if dressed up in splashy footnotes that misrepresent serious work and accurately present work even more ridiculous than that of the author. Rectifying the intellectual damage done by such a sentence requires a rigorous mind devoting pages to undoing the confusion and exposing the lack of content. *Whole books* of such sentences (see, for example, Catherine MacKinnon's *Feminism Unmodified*, 1987) dissuade those who lack the necessary rigor, endurance, or courage from responding. Until now, in philosophy, this seems to have meant everybody.

Finally, one of the few contemporary philosophers who possesses the necessary traits in sufficient quantities has responded to the thousands of papers and hundreds of books that would lead an outsider to think that philosophy is the silly studying the sillier. What is particularly admirable is that Michael Levin didn't need this. Already possessing a world-class reputation in abstruse areas of mathematical and other philosophies, Levin could have ignored the once-unimaginable depths of incompetence now exhibited by many of those who perform at philosophy conferences and conventions. All the other smart ones did.

Levin calls his book *Feminism and Freedom*, a title that reflects his belief that feminist philosophy generates a world view and a set of policies discordant with the requirements of liberty. He effectively demolishes both feminism's assumptions and the arguments drawn from them. *Feminism and Freedom* deserves an audience far wider than its obvious constituency of conservatives and others for whom the issues of liberty and freedom are of central interest.

Levin's primary concern is that a combination of illogic and bullying can lead—and has led—to policies that are inefficient at best, disastrous at worst, and always unjust. He examines the myriad areas in which a feminist environmental model has denied the relevance of physiologically-rooted sex differences, and then coerced ignorant and/or cowardly politicians into supporting policies that would make sense only if the model were correct. By the time Levin has demonstrated the lack of common sense in arguments for comparable worth, military Rambettes, unisex educational policies, alteration of the language, redefinition of excellence in athletics, and a score of other denials of human experience, one wonders what leg their supporters are left standing on.

Consider, for example, the case of the women who wanted to be firemen. These women, like all potential fire fighters, were given a strength test. To any of you who have ever lifted a fire hose, to say nothing of a 200-pound man, such a test is obviously necessary, given the nature of the job.

The judge who heard the womens' suit (*Berkman* v. *NYFD*) did not think so. When faced with the fact that all 88 female applicants failed the test, the judge decided that here was discrimination at its most pernicious. (The fact that over half the males failed the test doesn't seem to have bothered His Honor too much.) Demonstrating the correctness of the truism that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," the judge concluded that the odds against this happening in the absence of a biasing factor are less than one in ten trillion.

"Bias" has two different meanings—one being "statistical skewing resulting from real differences" and the

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other "invidious discrimination." Confusing them is crucial to the judge's argument. *If* it were true that men and women were equally strong, *then* the failure of 100 percent of the women would occur by chance only once every ten trillion sets of tests (on the average)—indicating that this particular test was probably discriminatory. But of course, as the more sharp-eyed among us have noticed, men and women are not equal in strength. With that as the given there is no argument.

In other cases Levin exposes fallacies both deeper and more subtle, and in every case he merely begins with exposing the weakness of thought and then demonstrates how weak thought has become public policy. This is an excellent book that will endure.

Steven Goldberg is chairman of the Department of Sociology at City College in New York.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Paris

by Curtis Cate

Twenty Years After the Invasion of Czechoslovakia

T.S. Eliot notwithstanding, April is almost certainly not the cruelest month. For the tens of millions of urban dwellers along the Eastern Seaboard who had to sweat it out this summer in conditions of infernal heat, as for the millions of others who watched despairingly as their wheat stems and cornstalks wilted across the parched plains of the Middle West, a more fitting candidate for the prize would surely be August—the torrid month which, already 2,000 years ago, was reducing Horace and his fellow Romans to a state of unair-conditioned limpness as they mopped their brows and cursed that baleful Dog-Star season—*atrox hora caniculae*—from which we Anglo-Saxons and Latins have inherited the word "canicular," and the Russians their word for holiday vacations, *kanikuli*.

There are, however, many other, less sun-blistered souls who have special reasons today for cursing the dog-starred month. I am thinking of the Czechs who, 20 years ago, watched with a numbed mixture of rage and disbelief as Soviet tanks rumbled into their capital, wiping the timid smile from that "socialism with a human face" on which they had set their hopes, and who more recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of those grim August (1968) days by gathering by the thousands in Prague's Václavské Námêstí—the long, rectangular square that bears the name of Bohemia's first Christian monarch (Yes, the Good King Wenceslaus of our Christmas carols)—chanting, "Freedom! Freedom! Freedom! . . . Russians, go home! . . . You have the dogs, we have the truth! . . . " and most insistently of all, "Dubček! Dubček! Dubček!"

It is probably difficult for Americans who limit their excursions abroad to Acapulco, the Caribbean, and the standard London-Amsterdam-Brussels-Paris-Rome circuit to get worked up over the continuing plight of the Czechs. Vienna—with its Prater, Ringstrasse, and pastry shops; Budapest—with its gypsy restaurants and surface veneer of prosperity; these have long been more tempting tourist attractions than Prague. Yet no one, I think, with the slightest ethnic sensibility can forget that first glimpse of the Malá Strana (literally, the "Small Side," because hemmed in between hill and river), rising up almost magically above Emperor Charles IV's towered bridge to the castle-crowned summit, from which, like an upraised sword, rises the single spire of Saint Vitus' Cathedral. It is a sight as unforgettable as that of the minarets and domes of the Sulimaniye and of Sultan Ahmed's "Blue" Mosque rising softly from the waters of the Sea of Marmora as one approaches Istanbul by ship.

Emperor Charles IV (1316-1378), who made Prague the capital of the Holy Roman Empire long before the Habsburgs of Austria annexed that imperial title for themselves, was a partly Czech, French-educated polyglot, as well as the scion of a Germanic family from Luxembourg, and his ascendancy offers further proof of the extent to which Prague was and has always been a Central rather than an Eastern European city. The Germans, precisely because they belong to this particular middle ground, long ago coined a word for it: *Mitteleuropa*—the European equivalent of our Middle West.

The Czech novelist Milan Kundera, in a memorable interview given to the Paris newspaper *Le Monde*, once took us all to task for talking so loosely about Eastern and Western Europe, as though they represented definite geographic entities. The continent, as we know well, is presently split down the middle from the Baltic to the mountains of Yugoslavia by an Iron Curtain erected by the Soviets; but, Kundera pointed out, precisely because we go on referring to the countries lying east of this curtain as part of *Eastern* Europe, we have unconsciously absorbed the Soviets' geopolitical viewpoint—which is that all lands lying east of the Elbe and the mountains of the Sude-

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tenland belong "irreversibly" to the Soviet empire. In so doing we relegate those unhappy peoples to a kind of alien "yonderland" or limbo, ruled over by the Kremlin. We make ourselves the unwitting victims of a verbal pollution, of a linguistic *fait accompli*, thereby helping to legitimize the partition of the continent and the continuing existence of the bristling, mine-strewn barrier which presently scars the face of Europe.

Milan Kundera was right. And in urging us to be more circumspect in our ways of thinking, he was offering us the same sort of friendly admonition as the Russian historian Mikhail Heller did when, at a conference on "disinformation" held four years ago in Paris, he remarked on the paradoxical anomaly of our contemporary world in which (because of blue jeans, T-shirts, and sneakers) "the universal mode of dress is American, while the universal mode of speech is Sovietese." (That invaluable diplomatic fig-leaf, "détente," is one example, like the now universally accepted cliché, "the superpowers"—which so conveniently places the USA on the same level of moral opprobrium as the USSR.)

Prague—like Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw, Budapest, Vienna, and Zagreb, if not Belgrade—belongs historically and geographically to Central, not to Eastern Europe. One striking proof of it is what happened to Bohemia (the westernmost part of Czechoslovakia) in the immediate aftermath of World War II. With the sole exception of Saxony and Thuringia, parts of which were briefly occupied in May and June of 1945 by units of General Patton's Third Army, western Bohemia was the only region of what are now called the "satellite" countries to have been occupied by the US Army as a result of the war against Hitler's Reich. Probably not one American in a thousand realizes it, but we then had a zone of occupation which ran from near the northwestern Sudeten border-town of Cheb past Marienbad and slightly east of Pilsen, all the way south to the Austrian border. Compared to what the Red Army had occupied—nine-tenths of Czechoslovakia—it was not much, but at least it was something, a symbol of our presence in and responsibility for this part of Central Europe. The question of Czechoslovakia's independence having barely been discussed at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences—where the burning issues were the future of a defeated Germany and of a "liberated" Poland—General Eisenhower had to make a quick trip to Prague in October 1945 to consult with President Eduard Beneš; and it was thanks to a joint agreement then reached that in December of that year the US Army's Twenty-Second Corps and the Soviets' Fifth Guards Army simultaneously evacuated their respective zones of occupation.

In August 1968, when the USSR's military forces reinvaded Czechoslovakia, the United States could have pointed out that the Soviets were violating a solemn US-Soviet-Czechoslovakian agreement made back in 1945. We could even have declared that we had every international right to reoccupy our own former zone of occupation in western Bohemia, including the major industrial city of Pilsen (home of the giant Skoda arms factory). Needless to say, we did nothing of the sort. His prestige already sadly battered by the war in Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson was gradually relinquishing power to his troubled Vice-President, Hubert Humphrey, while Americans were once again in the paralyzing throes of a presidential election campaign. A historic opportunity for taking the diplomatic offensive was thus missed, with the result that US policy in Central Europe—if one can speak of anything as clear-cut and definite as a "policy"—became one of tacit acceptance of the new Brezhnev-dictated "status quo."

What the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia achieved was not simply Soviet occupation of regions of western Bohemia the Red Army had never overrun in 1945; it in effect shattered the genuine détente which had begun to emerge in 1967 and which had made such progress that it had acquired a special name—that of "polycentrism." What this meant was that the two "superpowers"—to lapse again into Sovietese—were gradually losing their grip over their respective "client states" and "satellites." As a result, a kind of continental spectrum of regimes was beginning to appear with all sorts of political and social gradations—extending from the infrared neo-Maoism of Albania, the standpat communism of the Brezhnev-Suslov crowd, to the more flexible and humane "socialism" of the Dubček-Smrkovsky team, and on across the map of Western Europe, with its different social-democratic and conservative governments, to the extreme right and ultraviolet "fascism with a human face" (an expression coined by the Czech chess player Ludek Pachman) of Francisco Franco and Antonio Salazar. This truly meaningful development of sociopolitical coexistence would inevitably have eroded the Iron Curtain and put a gradual end to the unnatural division of the continent into two hostile blocs. But August 1968 put an abrupt end to that auspicious evolution. The lid was clamped down on Central and Eastern Europe, the fissures in the Iron Curtain were once again sealed. And it was all done so swiftly and successfully that overnight "polycentric" vanished from the vocabulary of our pundits. How many of them, I wonder, even recall its heyday? Very few. Proof of how right Jean-François Revel is when he says, "Our greatest enemy is amnesia."

For, lo and behold! emerging from the ashes of that genuine, polycentric "reduction of tensions" rose its phoenix-like successor, the much publicized "détente" of the early 1970's. This bogus apparition was founded on the outspoken proposition that one "socialist" state has the right, and even the obligation, to "assist" (i.e., invade) another "socialist" state in the name of proletarian fraternity (what came to be known as the "Brezhnev Doctrine"), and on the unspoken admission by the West that the USSR, by virtue of its military achievements during World War II and because of "the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union"—one of the fateful phrases uttered by Jack Kennedy during the tense months preceding the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961—had every right to prolong its "temporary" occupation of Czechoslovakia indefinitely. It was this utterly phony détente which that grand master of diplomatic sleight-of-hand, Henry Kissinger, managed to get an initially skeptical Richard Nixon to swallow, hook, line, and sinker.

The crowning achievement of this inherently deceptive "détente" was the Helsinki Final Act, duly endorsed by

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the heads of state or the representatives of 33 European and two North American states in late July and early August (once again that fateful month!) of 1975. Overlooked in the mind-fuddling euphoria induced by that "historic" conclave was the crude fact that at the very moment of signing, the Soviet Union was violating no less than six of the ten general Principles enunciated in the preamble as properly "guiding Relations between Participating States." (Article III—Inviolability of Frontiers; Article IV—Territorial Integrity of States; Article V—Peaceful Settlement of Disputes; Article VI—Nonintervention in the internal affairs of others, etc.)

There was, however, one observer in the West who did not lose his head in the midst of the triumphant clamor. In a blistering critique written for the *Figaro* in Paris, Raymond Aron roundly declared that "if there were still a real statesman, in the United States or in one of the main countries of the West, this comedy would not have taken place." I don't know if Henry Kissinger read that article; but if he did, he must have blanched at finding himself so casually relegated by his one-time geopolitical rival and later friend to the trash-heap of second-rate politicians.

Since then 13 years have passed, and everything Raymond Aron feared and foresaw has come to pass. Red Army soldiers continue to occupy Bohemia, which Bismarck once called the heartland of Europe and the strategic key to the control of the continent. When, last July, some incorrigible optimists reported that the Kremlin was going to make a goodwill gesture by beginning to withdraw its army of occupation, this fanciful canard was gruffly shot down by the Soviet premier, Nikolai Ryzhkov, during a visit to Prague—although he did generously hold out the hope that Soviet troops might be withdrawn "before the end of the century"!

Today, the Brezhnevite Gustav Husak has been replaced by the neo-Brezhnevian Miloš Jakeš, an apparatchik of the same ilk who is pursuing the by now classic cat-and-mouse game with dissidents, occasionally jailing them for a few weeks, depriving them of university and other posts, and forcing them to take menial jobs as lumberjacks, street sweepers, boiler-stokers, or janitors as a punishment for daring to suggest that their country honor the "free movement of persons and ideas" promised by the Helsinki accords. In Prague, if not in Moscow, Communist "orthodoxy" still reigns supreme—so much so that Mrs. Eva Fojtikova, wife of Jan Fojtik, the regime's No. 1 ideologist, saw fit to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of her country by writing an article in *Kmen* (the weekly organ of the Union of Czechoslovakian Writers), praising Joseph Stalin!

As the French say, "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*" But the crucial question remains, one that the next administration should be required to answer, no matter who wins the presidential election: how much longer must we wait before one of our "stars" in Washington has the courage to suggest that the present Soviet leadership provide concrete proof of its disarmament intentions by pulling its five divisions out of Czechoslovakia? Or must we, like the well-conditioned circus dogs we have become, go on meekly cringing and cowering, numbed by the thought that merely to raise such a question would be an intolerable "provocation" for the Kremlin—one certain to raise Soviet hackles and to make our State Department diplomats quake in their Foggy-Bottom slippers?

Curtis Cate is a historian and biographer who now lives in Paris. In 1945 he served with a Russian liaison team attached to the US Army's Twenty-Second Corps in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Thank You for Smoking

A wise man once observed that the existence of a nation requires that many things be forgotten—in particular, those things that divide its people. Maybe that's why the South never made it. Black and white Southerners have had their little disagreements in the past, of

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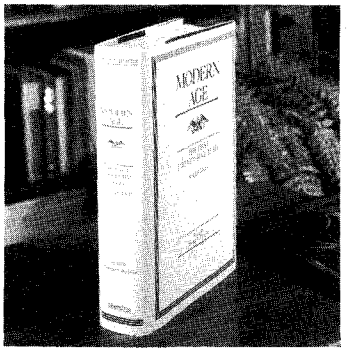

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course, and so have flatlanders and hillbillies, rednecks and gentry. Politics and religion have usually been at least as good for an argument here as anywhere else. But if you want a topic with real divisive potential, something really fissionable, let's talk barbecue.

In this respect (in others, too, of course) barbecue is unlike grits. Grits glue the South together, if you'll excuse the image. Black and white, uplands and lowlands, *everybody* likes grits, and the only disagreement is over whether the word is singular or plural. A few years ago, a fellow named Stan Woodward made a marvelous movie called *It's Grits*, an hour or so of heartwarming grits lore, with testimonials from illustrious Southerners like Strom Thurmond and Craig Claibourne and from common folk including the entire crowd at a Gamecocks football game ("Give me a G!"). But the last time I saw Stan he was starting to film a movie on barbecue, and he hasn't been heard from since. I'm afraid he's a casualty. Reporting Southern barbecue is like reporting Lebanon: risky business.

Smoked meat is a subject folks can get *excited* about, you know what I mean? Barbecue drives a wedge between Texas (beef) and the Carolinas (pork), and completely isolates those parts of Kentucky around Owensboro (mutton). Even porcivores can't agree: barbecue divides western North Carolina (tomato) from eastern North Carolina (no tomato), not to mention from South Carolina (mustard). You might say barbecue pits Southerners against one another. (Sorry.)

Now, personally, I don't regret these hard feelings. If they keep the South's proud local barbecue tradition alive — well, long may they wave. When a "Texas-style" barbecue joint opened in my Carolina hometown, I was delighted to see it go out of business within a year. Not that I don't like brisket. I love it, in Texas. But eating that stuff was like drinking Dr. Pepper in Munich — just *not right*, you understand? Southern barbecue is the closest thing we have in the US to Europe's wines or cheeses: drive a hundred miles and the barbecue changes. Let's keep it that way.

Anyone who cares about barbecue needs to see a new book by Greg Johnson and Vince Staten, called *Real Barbecue* ($8.95 in Harper & Row paperback). This is one important book, a cultural landmark. Remember a movie called *The Endless Summer*? This book does with barbecue what that did with surfing.

Johnson and Staten are reporters in Louisville, and they are fanatics. They are, in other words, just the men to travel 40,000 miles and eat roughly 200 pounds of barbecue (629,200 calories) in order to compile a sort of Whole Barbecue Catalog: 260 pages, with annotated listings of barbecue joints, sources for flash-frozen air-freight barbecue, recipes for side dishes, and plans for monster cookers guaranteed to capture your neighbors' attention. Boxed here and there are some tasty barbecue quotations (although not the raunchy testimonial from the North Carolina-born novelist Tom Robbins that the prurient can find on page 57 of *Another Roadside Attraction*). The book also includes nice little essays on such topics as the names of barbecue joints ("Bubba's" is indeed a favorite) and why Cincinnati doesn't have good barbecue.

Inevitably, the book has a Southern slant, since nearly all of the great pit-folk come from the South, and most are still in it. But Greg and Vince have worked real hard to include the rest of the country. Maybe too hard: their affirmative action has turned up what they claim is semi-decent barbecue in Vermont and a mail-order sauce from Castro Street, San Francisco, that I think I'll pass up. When I know what these guys are talking about, though, they do have pretty close to perfect pitch (I'd thought the fact that O'Brien's in Bethesda was actually good was my very own secret discovery), so I want to try some of the places I don't know. As a matter of fact, I was reading the book while visiting Chicago last August, and tried to promote an expedition to Lem's or Leon's for some Southside ribs, but my Hyde Park quiche-eating hosts thought I was out of my mind. Next time.

I do confess to mixed feelings about the book's list of great joints, because it's almost a law that fame isn't good for such places. As Greg and Vince point out, for example, after Calvin Trillin wrote about Arthur Bryant's in Kansas City, it started selling its sauce in bottles with *price codes* on them. But since the cat is out of the bag, or the pig out of the poke, let's quibble (that's part of the fun).

I could show off by complaining that the book doesn't mention the Wild Horse BBQ, in Salisaw, Oklahoma. (Drinks from a machine, no health certificate in evidence, a side order of jalapeños, and *hot* sauce on the beef ribs that did in my effete Eastern taste buds before I could tell much about the meat, but my Fort Smith friends swear by it.) You'll probably get to Atlanta before Salisaw, though, so I'll plug the Auburn Rib Shack, also unaccountably omitted. I don't know if Greg and Vince missed the Shack, or just hit it on a bad day, but it's on Auburn Avenue near the Ebenezer Baptist Church and SCLC headquarters, which ought to count for something. Harold's, near the prison, gets the book's highest rating ("As good as we've ever had"); I ate there once back-to-back with the Auburn Rib Shack, and I'd rate the outcome a draw.

If you get over our way, we could check out Allen and Sons, which the boys rate "Real good." But lately their hushpuppies have gone to hell. (I don't think the lard is hot enough. It happened about the same time they put the hanging plants in.) Now, when my wife and I have the time, we drive 30 miles to O.T.'s, outside Apex, which isn't in the book. O.T.'s barbecue is standard-issue Piedmont pig — that is, merely transcendentally wonderful. What keeps us going back are the accessories: great baking-powder hushpuppies and Brunswick stew that rivals the best burgoo I've ever had. (As a Tennesseean, frankly, I find that Tar Heel Brunswick stew is too often just a peppery mush.) O.T. is a Baptist preacher, and serves no beer, alas, but for a buck he'll give you an enormous plate of "skin" — pork rind. You can feel your arteries clog as you crunch your way through it. Both Research Triangle yuppies and construction workers find O.T.'s worth the drive for lunch. Once I watched the News5 helicopter plop down in the lot, and fly off with several plates to go.

I could go on, putting Scruggs's unrated Knoxville ribs up against Brother Jack's ("Real good"), for example. But you get the idea. If all of this means nothing to you, I'm sorry

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for you. If you enjoy it, two bucks to P.O. Box 30, Prospect, Kentucky 40059, will bring you a copy of *Real Barbecue News* with, among other things, the itinerary of a three-day, two-night, eleven-barbecue-and-one-fried-pie-joint tour of Kentucky. (Between that and Joe Bob Briggs's *News of the Weird*, my mailman has started to look at me funny.) Better yet, get the book. Give it to your aerobics instructor for Christmas.

John Shelton Reed lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and never met a smoked pig he didn't like.

Letter From Ohio

by Janet Scott Barlow

Flat-Out Funny

Ten people are gathered around the table in a Chicago kitchen. Most of them are Kentuckians who left the farm for the factories during World War II. They brought with them what is called in the country their "ways"—their love of simple food, their attachment to plain music, their conviction that their money, their politics, and their religion are none of anybody's business. Above all, they brought with them their idea of what is funny—not amusing, not witty, but *funny*.

As their children charge about or sit listening on their parents' laps, the people tell jokes, and huge bursts of collective laughter explode in the small room. When they run out of jokes, they tell stories. The jokes and stories sound very much the same, the only difference being that the jokes are someone's invention, while the stories are real. It is significant that the laughter for the truth is often louder than the laughter for the inventions.

What is happening here is more than an exercise in diversion or self-supplied entertainment. An attempt is being made to accept, if not always to understand, the nature of life. For these people the attempt is, on the whole, successful. This group is my family—my parents, my aunts and uncles—and I am one of the children waiting expectantly for the next roar.

What was so funny in that crowded kitchen? Maybe it's easier to start with what was not funny. Puns and wordplay were not funny, although there was present an instinctual feel for the rhythms of language, the effect of a well-timed pause, the impact of a well-chosen phrase. Humor that was too big—flashy, urgent, aggressive—was not funny; but humor that was too small, too whimsical or mellow, was even less funny. In other words, Andy Rooney would have lost a funny contest to Joan Rivers, but the outcome wouldn't have mattered. (The neurotic, self-revealing humor of Woody Allen would have been considered simply unfathomable and creepy.) The abstract and the fantastical were not funny. I heard hundreds of jokes in my house when I was growing up, and not one of them began, "This gorilla walks into a bar . . . "

That leaves reality, as it was seen by my family. What was funny was the predictable unpredictability of reality, the known capacity of human beings to take the wholly improbable and turn it into fact. What was funny were the ways in which people could be, in my father's words, "just plain goofy." Goofiness was determined by stupidity, not ignorance. You could be without knowledge, but if you were without sense, you became a story to be told around the kitchen table.

While there was an edge to the laughter, there was no meanness. The general feeling was, *This could be me, maybe, but by God it isn't, so far.* And because the humor was not self-focused, there was little of the performer's vanity. The premium was never on *being* funny. The point was to recognize what was funny and to reveal it, layer by layer, until it was *there*, unbelievable and undeniable, for all to see.

Here is funny: Faye, an acquaintance of my parents, is given to long narrations containing too many detours and too little point. Nevertheless, Faye is thought-provoking, in her fashion. One night she begins one of her verbal rambles by putting a finger to her chin and reflecting, "It was on Thanksgiving . . . I believe it was a Thursday. . . . "

Here is flat-out funny: A man named Dwight, a sort of relative by marriage of my family, is the backseat passenger in a big green automobile. Dwight wants to get rid of his chewing gum. So he decides the best way to get rid of his chewing gum is to throw it out the door. Since the car is a 1951 Lincoln with reverse-mounted back doors—handles toward the front of the car, hinges toward the rear—and since this particular Lincoln is traveling 70 miles an hour, the laws of physics take over. The door blows off. And, since the owner and driver of the car is my father's brother, this story is even more hilarious to my father and no less funny to my uncle. The additional knowledge that everyone was bound for a visitor's day at the Indiana State Penitentiary is the crowning perfection.

To those inclined to ask questions—like why Dwight didn't simply roll down the window, or swallow his gum, or put it behind his ear, or forget the whole thing—this story will already have fallen short on the laugh meter. If you want to get analytical, it was a case of double goofy mixed with a twist of fate. Dwight opened the door of a speeding car (goofy) when other alternatives were available (inexplicably goofy), a car fate had determined to be uniquely ill-designed for double goofiness. *But why did Dwight do it?* Who knows? Why did God create Lincolns with reverse-mounted back doors? For that matter, why did God create chewing gum?

Scholars and folklorists who have studied Kentucky culture and the storytelling heritage that pervades it describe traditional Kentucky humor as fatalistic, Calvinistic, reflective of the influences of Celtic clannishness and hardscrabble living—essentially tragic. I suppose they're right, but this seems awfully heavy baggage to hang on that good-time group in my childhood kitchen, people who looked at the truth and could not help laughing. What they saw before they laughed was that life is crazy and sometimes the craziness can have a go at your Lincoln and if it's going to happen it may as well happen on a ride to the state pen. Now, if you don't find that funny, there's always the one about the gorilla who walks into a bar.

Janet Scott Barlow covers popular culture from her home in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

Waiting for the Mountains

Eastern Montana: a gigantic plate of congealed gravy. Chicken gravy. A shimmering, menacing, pale silver-yellow, begrudgingly patched with some better-off-nameless light green culture. We're talking stubble here in this drought year, not chest-high grain. The gravy platter stretches east and west for 500 miles, from just inside the North Dakota border to Shelby, Montana (dare you to try and find it).

Friends warned us about the drive, the weeping monotony of it. I thought they were exaggerating. They weren't. I thought eastern Montana would be simply an extension of beautiful, colorful western North Dakota. It isn't. Past Beach or Bainville, abandon all hope.

An hour out of Bismarck, we all start watching the horizon, even though at least two of us know it's pointless until tomorrow afternoon. It hasn't rained for six weeks; the high western clouds tease us in more ways than one.

US Highway 2 winds thin as a knife through this curdled wasteland. Shoulderless, with steep, gaping roadside ditches. Over every tenth long, flat hill lies a despairing shack, up close to the highway. And every mile or so presents a little white roadside cross or a group of them. The largest marker we see is composed of 15 crosses. We pass a car every 20 miles (the driver invariably lifting a hand from the wheel in greeting), and the crosses—some decorated with fresh miniature plastic wreaths—beckon along the wretched landscape of the straightaway like a trail we're doomed to follow into the ditch. These people died from *boredom*, pure and simple.

Slender lines of large dark hills appear and disappear in the heat like bears in a fog: once to our left, later to our right, eight and ten hours out of Bismarck, respectively. Are these *the mountains? the kids ask. No, these are* babies *compared to the* real *mountains. In the rearview mirror I see my disbelieving flatland children elbow each other and roll their eyes: sure, mom, sure.*

One extremely clever Montana joke enjoyed by North Dakotans, signifying the sharp *angst* of human isolation and, specifically, of man's unwholeness without woman, is: "Montana: where men are men and sheep are fearful." This witticism, a crucial ingredient of North Dakota office banter or an after-hours sports-bar dart game, is also a shameful lie: the few sheep I see on our drive west look as though they'd be grateful for *any* attention.

And then on the horizon, six hours past Glasgow: the feral gray teeth of the Rockies.

The affable manager of the hotel in Glasgow, where we spend our first night, tells my husband the next morning that we've taken the wrong route to Glacier National Park. Well, what's the *right* route? Anywhere but through Glasgow, he says, not smiling. There's a Pizza Hut and a Dairy Queen, but no Hardee's or McDonald's in town where we can get a quick sausage muffin breakfast to eat on the road. My husband asks where we *should* eat, and is recommended a truck stop in Malta, 70 miles west. ("He'd better hope the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce never finds out about him," my husband laughs later, but I'm quite sure the gentleman *is* the Chamber of Commerce.) Famished, we pull into a supermarket to buy sweet rolls and cold fruit juice. Our daughter chooses some awful strawberry-papaya concoction stickier than her caramel roll, but never let it be said that my kids don't have some fruit at breakfast.

We drive. And drive. And drive. In a fit of desperate gaiety, we sing. "It ain't gonna rain no more, no more." ("How in the heck can I wash my neck / if it ain't gonna rain no more?") We sing it faster and faster, raising the pitch a half-step each time, all of us joining in the frenzy. When we can't go any faster or higher, we fizzle, embarrassed at our corniness; the kids look out the window, and nothing has changed: we've passed three mile markers. The space-time continuum is a cruel hoax; no time passes and we get nowhere. There aren't even any license plates with which to play that stupid game. Where are the *mountains*? the kids ask. You said today we'd see *mountains*.

I offer a Little Debbie Oatmeal Cream Pie to the first mountain-spotter. That excites them for exactly four minutes; then they return to their pastimes: sleeping (13-year-old girl) and wet mouth noises (8-year-old boy: car chase, chicken, nuclear bomb). We run out of cold pop, having drunk a six-pack so fast we could all use a bathroom. The nearest one is a lifetime away. Our son is willing to use the ditch, but Jenny gives us a scorching look at that suggestion. We cross the 108th meridian and climb imperceptibly into our agoraphobic nightmare, the seventh circle of hell, where we drown as we die of thirst.

Driving home, we take the Glasgow man's advice and follow US 200 from Great Falls to Circle. Frankly, it's a horse apiece. This time we do the entire 750 miles in one day, leaving at 7 a.m. (our time) and getting home at 9:30 that night. During the afternoon, the landscape is so surreally *tan* and the towns so scarce that I exceed the legal speed limit by nearly half my age. (The fine for even such speeding in Montana is a measly $5, paid on the spot. And worth every penny. There's another Montana joke about a little old lady who gives the nice officer a $10 bill and says, "Half of this is for the return trip.") The kids are open-eyed but catatonic in the backseat, and nothing—neither food nor drink nor the latest Starship tape—elicits a human response. They are too bored for sleep or mouth noises or even pinching each other.

But all this week we remembered the mountains in our bedtime prayers, and two of us have been taught, I hope (and two reminded), that if God can do *that*, He can do anything. The most wonderful thing of all is that the Rockies are, technically, a *mistake*. A flaw in the earth's crust. If life were perfect (or God less wise), we'd be standing sadly in a different kind of place.

Jane Greer edits Plains Poetry Journal.

Letter From Newfoundland

by R.E. Lieb

The Community Meeting

I moved to a small island in Newfoundland's Placentia Bay.

Newfoundland was settled mainly by fishermen from western England and

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from Ireland; to this day more than 80 percent of the population is of that origin. Yet I have been told that, geologically, Newfoundland is part of the Appalachian chain, with a piece of Scotland stuck to it on the east. Like Appalachia, it is a region largely bypassed by the industrial and cultural developments of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Even today there live in Placentia Bay men who once fished for cod and lobster in sailing punts and rowing dories. There are women still alive who used to keep sheep and shear them and card and spin the wool with which to knit socks and mittens for their family. There are people, not yet in their 40's, who remember a time when their underwear was made from linen flour bags; when some children came to school in moccasins made from raw cowhide, or barefoot; when a radio was a precious possession. Probably there are still men alive who in their youth went hunting with muzzle loaders; I still hear talk of how many fingers of powder it took to shoot a moose, and other such lore.

The three dozen hardcover books that I brought with me were respectfully called my "library." (I arrived here not all that long after the great resettlement scheme, by which the government of the day, promising an abundance of very well-paid industrial jobs, moved the population of some 2,000 isolated fishing villages—the "outports"—to so-called growth centers where services like schooling and health care could be provided more efficiently.)

Some of the older Newfoundlanders called me "uncle." They were accustomed to small communities in which everybody had a definite status and a definite relationship with the rest of the community. I wasn't a clergyman or a doctor or a government official or a teacher, yet I had books and a typewriter and was presumed to be well-educated and was decidedly not a mere Bill or Joe. So in their perplexity those dear old people called me "uncle," even though I was much younger than they.

Younger, better informed people with less natural courtesy questioned me about my reason for wanting to move into an outport when everybody else was moving away. They hankered after the life they had seen in Hollywood movies, after big cars and drive-ins. They asked me, distrustfully: "Are you a hippie?"

I said that I probably was. I had had no association with hippies in the city, and thus no opportunity to form any definite conclusions about them. I knew that they were dissatisfied in general with the way in which society was going and were trying to reestablish healthier, more sensible life-styles. I could agree with that.

Only later, when hippies—who by that time had rejected that appellation and referred to themselves as "long-hairs" and "heads"—derided me as a reactionary and an establishment type and the Baron of Back Cove, did I realize that I decidedly was not a hippie. I had, in my very unhappy childhood, developed somehow the utterly anachronistic aspiration to become the lord of an English island. I wanted the sense of belonging and stability that centuries-old stone buildings give. I wanted to be in a situation in which I could not readily be bossed around. I wanted . . .

Well, the adults around me ridiculed that notion.

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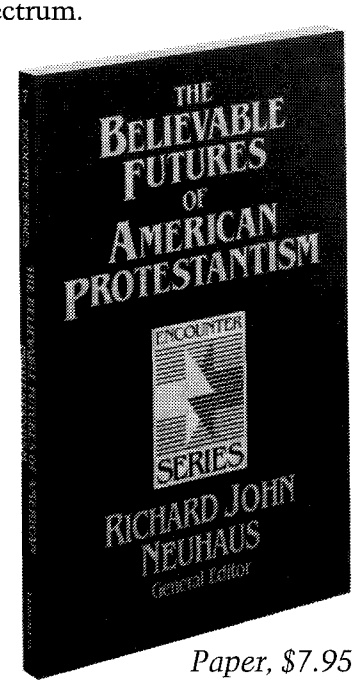

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So I dropped out of school in grade six and became a drifter till, many years later, I happened to read about the little island in Newfoundland. I moved here with the intention of building a home with thick stone walls, of planting apple trees and gooseberry bushes, of having cows or goats and Old English sheepdogs, of filling my home with books and paintings and nice mugs and a few cats.

I was able to buy here a one-acre lot with a grand view over the sea and with a brook, for $50—the seller wanted 20 bucks, I wanted to give at least 100; we settled amicably.

Most of the residents of this island had moved away during the preceding five years under the Resettlement Program, but a handful of families were still "hanging on." I got the job of postmaster, which nobody else wanted because the salary amounted to barely $100 a month and the job required waiting two nights a week for the early morning coastal steamer.

A young fellow sold me, on a day when he wanted money for booze badly, 40 lobster traps of which 25 were still serviceable. I obtained an ancient rowing dory and started to fish for lobsters in the mornings, before office hours. I also took a job as a bartender-cum-bouncer at a tavern in the nearest community on the main island.

One Sunday evening when I was behind the bar, two heavy nailed boots and a huge bearskin coat walked in. In the upturned collar was a face, pale, with nervous brown eyes, which looked ludicrously out of proportion and seemed almost as small as an orange. The personage in the coat labored to give me a firm handshake and to say with a *basso profundo*:

"Hi! I'm Paul. You're the guy who lives on Woody Island, right?"

He had something of the apostle about him: a nonentity raised to great consequence as a bearer of a message from a higher being. He imparted the good news to me:

A certain folksinger, who then was having a little more than the 15 minutes of fame supposedly allotted to all of us, had bought the 70-foot hull of a schooner which had been rotting for at least a dozen years on a ten-mile distant sandbank. He and his friends—Paul among them—planned to have the hull towed to Woody Island, there to rebuild and refurbish the schooner, and sail with it to tropical islands somewhere past Tahiti.

A few days after meeting Paul I picked up several hippie-esque men and women with my boat—an old 21-foot punt with an even older one-cylinder gasoline engine. It was a very windy day. I kept the boat and passengers as dry as possible by steering into the wind and then letting the boat run ahead of it, following a zigzag course to the island.

My passengers were not pleased. I was informed that Paul had captained a sailing schooner in California, that in one great storm he had tied himself to the mast and steered the schooner to safety when everybody else aboard was sure of disaster. So Paul took over the tiller and steered a straight course across the wind, which had all of us drenched before long and some of us rather green in the face. By the time we arrived at the island, Paul and the others were very angry at me and my stupid boat.

The former mayor of Woody Island and I had together bought—very cheap—a three-bedroom house with two bay windows and a great view, simply to keep it from being left to decay or vandalized. We put the house at the disposal of the newcomers. They settled down to await the coming of the messiah who would take them to paradise—the Folksinger was on tour. He sent his friends frequent spiritual sustenance in the form of pound cakes of marijuana.

I really cannot remember anything that these people did other than sleep till 11 or 12, and then have breakfast which merged into lunch which merged into supper. After supper they plinked a bit on guitars, and got ready to write poetry that was never written, and talked about geodesic domes, and drank herbal tea, and smoked up. On nice days they came outside for a while to sun themselves and watch the locals work. One of them started a collection of scrap metal, which he laid out in front of the house till it covered part of the road. And they filled a calendar with outraged comments about autumn rain and fog, and winter snow and ice.

They drove Paul away long before the Folksinger showed up. They could not tolerate his incurable hankering for jelly beans.

He went. Others came. Heavy boots, bulky coats, strong handshakes, and fake folksy speech (like saying "purty" for "pretty" where one would generally say "interesting" or "nice") were *de rigueur* among them. They talked about erecting a 30-foot-high teepee and living in and around it naked, and complained because no organic rice and beansprouts were available at the little island store.

For whatever reason, I became very fond of a fellow who liked to be called the King and who described himself as a "published poet"—his work turned out to be about 20 typewritten pages stapled together. He was probably close to 40, for he was a deserter from the American army. He always sported a red woolen scarf that was at least ten feet long—the ends touched the ground—and a toothy FDR grin. In a peculiarly American manner, he knew everything and nothing. He could dismiss any topic with a couple of sentences, but could not maintain an intelligent conversation on any subject. Still, the fellow was wonderfully enthusiastic when I lent him my volumes of Lord Macaulay's *History of England* and spent hours repeating to me what he had read.

The girls had no doubt that they were liberated and spiritually far above Newfoundland women. But they cooked and slept with men who showed very little sense of obligation toward them. At 19, Barbara had already had two abortions, because, as she said, she did not believe in interfering with natural sex, while on the other hand her man said that he was not ready for fatherhood yet. She was eating several prescription pills a day to repair the ravages of some fad diet.

Lindsay's tales could fill a whole book. She was a slender girl in her late 20's, with a somewhat adolescent body and a Cinderella air. Among her many peculiar habits was that of showing all and sundry a photo of a shallow pond and trees beyond; she stood knee-deep and naked in that pond, surrounded by half a dozen naked bearded fellows.

Lindsay had found her prince: the Folksinger. She had born him a daughter, on the kitchen floor of a commune. Of course, she told me, the commune members had cooked the afterbirth and eaten it. And now the prince had graciously conceded that

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when he was *not* on tour, when he was actually with Lindsay and she cooked and washed for him and slept with him and admired him, she could eat at his expense. Otherwise she had to fend for herself and her baby.

The Folksinger showed up in early spring, with heavy boots and a bulky coat that belied his pampered middle-class upbringing, and a big beard that hid his weak chin. He, too, gave me a firm handshake. And a few days later he came out to my place and told me to come across the hill into the main harbor of the Old Cove for a "community meeting."

I was busy. I told him that in any case a meeting ought to be called by Alec, the former mayor and the island storekeeper, the descendant of five or six generations of islanders. The Folksinger told me not to be *like that*, and that we must get our energies together and make good things happen.

When I got to the hall I found all the Newfoundlanders sitting on the right side, and the "heads" clustered on the other side. I sat with the Newfoundlanders. The heads talked among themselves, and one or the other came over to lecture the locals. Some of the Newfoundland women had moist eyes. Lindsay had just lectured them on proper childrearing.

Lindsay, who had determined not to feed her baby anything but bananas and breast milk for the first year; Lindsay, whose baby was now about eight months old and sat hunched and cried whenever she saw someone eat; Lindsay, who now and then in anger stuffed a handful of nuts and raisins into the baby's mouth to shut it up!

Mary came to preach to us on how we must avoid s--t food—chips and chocolate bars, etc. Mary, who looked like a character out of Dick Tracy, with her big boots and her bulky black coat and her big sunglasses and long hair and no discernible face; Mary, who had been observed stealing candy bars from the store.

Dale, who had just been released from a mental hospital (oh how I wish I would have the space to repeat his life story as he told it to me!), said that we must remove the labels from all emptied tin cans, and must cut out both ends, and must cut the cans lengthwise, and flatten the tin and save it.

I had been waiting for some sort of demur from the Newfoundlanders. But none had come, and I could not keep my mouth shut any longer.

"What for?" I cried.

"The tin might be useful some day. One never knows," was the airy reply.

There were a few more such preliminaries. Then the heads launched their main proposal: the locals, myself included, must hand over to them our livestock and pasture and gardens, plus cash; and they would organize a vegetable co-op for us. They had already appointed Dale to the job of secretary/treasurer/manager of the co-op. Dale, who had moved into an empty house and there in the middle of the kitchen constructed from driftwood a floor-to-ceiling thing that looked like modern art but was, according to him, a combination bed/lunch counter/work bench/clothes rack/bookshelf. Dale, who swayed about drunk or stoned and talked about how he would make us all rich. The heads were talking about a tractor, about sailing vegetables in the yet-to-be-rebuilt schooner to Newfoundland's capital, St. John's.

I did not want to have any part of their vegetable co-op. I started to howl. No way would I give my two cows and hay meadow and apple trees and money to their bloody socialist neo-feudalism in which the Folksinger would be the lord and his friends his court and the rest of us the peasants. No way would I hand over my property and tools to a bunch of people who had no money and tools and skills of their own to put into the venture, but felt they had a divine right to govern.

I cursed the idiocy of proposing to ship vegetables in an old sailing schooner around two capes where it might be delayed many days by adverse winds, when only six miles distant was a road over which we could reach St. John's by motor vehicle in two hours. I cried:

"And where on the island can you plough a furrow longer than ten yards without ending up in a bog or on a rock or over a cliff? And how much would it cost to get a tractor and a plough and other equipment, and seedlings or a greenhouse, and to support Dale till the harvest? And Dale has no experience in farming or business management! And you haven't done a lick of work on that schooner yet. All the old fishermen tell me it is too far out of shape to be rebuilt! I'll tell you what you can do!"

I told them, and stormed out.

They came after me and told me what a bastard I was and how nice it would have been for poor Dale to be able to run something and how I had destroyed something beautiful that was about to happen.

Barbara has married her man since then, so I am told. He works for an oil company, his beard long shaved off, and they live in a suburban bungalow. Dale did many weird and disquieting things on this island before disappearing and being arrested at the St. John's airport for trying to thumb a ride on a departing jet. I really think he wanted to go back to a mental hospital; if so, his wish was granted. Paul is supposedly sailing another schooner in the Pacific. Lindsay lost her prince and lives in an apartment in a very run-down city neighborhood. What became of Mary and the King and the others I don't know.

The schooner is still rotting on that sandbank.

The Folksinger has been back here a few times, once with his mother, and once with a strange woman who, when they were guests at my place, dished out the salad with her hands, and a while later went into convulsions at the supper table. "I'm a dancer, you know, and must exercise!" she said while jerking and twisting in her chair, before coffee and pie. She had two sons with her and bragged that the Folksinger got up in the mornings and made breakfast for the boys and got them ready for school. And then she got all worked up over the fact that my wife brought me another cup of coffee, and told my wife to assert herself against me, to be her own person.

She wasn't with the Folksinger very long.

The last time he was here, he told me that his and Lindsay's daughter, then five, had hit another child in a commune out in British Columbia. He said, "Of course she learned that in Newfoundland" (she had left before her first birthday). And he sighed, "We tried to help the people here, but they didn't appreciate it!"

R.E. Lieb writes for the Canadian magazine Rural Delivery.

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LAW

Is It Time to End Prohibition?

by Clyde Wilson

The lessons of history are never quite definitive. History repeats itself, but not exactly, and the trick is to know where the differences come in. Nevertheless, in the case of drug abuse and its control we have as good a lesson and as close an analogy as history ever provides—Prohibition. Unfortunately, our politicians have no historical memory, or perhaps the trouble is that memory serves reason and not appetite and hence is of no use to politicians. In any case, we have now reached the point where Prohibition was about 1930. What had begun as a misguided moral crusade in which many Americans had vast emotional investment had devolved into a scandal of hypocrisy, violence, and corruption. Sensible people knew all along that this was inevitable and that the problem should have been left where it could have been rationally dealt with. It should have been left to the states.

There are, of course, weightier arguments for the prohibition of most drugs than there ever were for alcohol. Alcohol was traditional and ineradicable, whereas drugs are relatively new or foreign and could have been stopped if vigorous and effective action had been taken early enough. It is too late for that now. A considerable portion of our population is beyond the pale, and it is useless to pretend that they will adhere to standards of behavior that have no meaning for them.

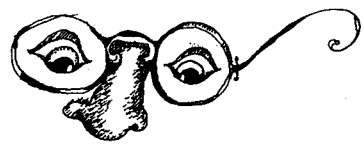
If we were to tackle the problem of drugs as a law enforcement problem, we might make some headway. But this has not happened, nor will it. Listen carefully to what the politicians *of both parties* are saying, and you will hear that for them, drugs are not a law enforcement problem, they are a welfare problem. People who buy and use illegal substances are not lawbreakers who ought to be punished. They are just another set of unfortunate victims of society who have to be saved by the government. If that's the case, how can we punish the users? Instead we blame the pushers and get tough with foreign exporters.

There is something ludicrous and contemptible about a powerful country blaming paltry neighbors for the misbehavior of its own citizens. It is as if the Bolivians had, like the British in China in the early 19th century, invaded California and *forced us* to buy the stuff. A little history and common sense would lead any person capable of reason and honesty to believe that given the nature of Latin American countries, it is childish to blame a poor country for selling its best product where there is a demand for it.

It doesn't help that the politicians who are now outraged that a tinpot dictator in Panama has been acting as a drug profiteer are exactly the same people who turned over the Canal to our noble Panamanian allies. Or that the people who are so exercised about the inability of the federal government to interdict boatloads of drugs from crossing the border are exactly the same people who are unconcerned that the government is also incapable of the much easier and more vital task of protecting the border from millions after millions of illegal aliens.

The latest fad is advocating a federal death penalty for drug pushers. This is, in fact, either hysteria or a sham. As far as I know there are no documented cases of drug pushers actually holding people down, forcing them to pay for the stuff and then ingest it. But in my state there is in prison a man who kidnapped an innocent young woman from a shopping center parking lot and subjected her to rape, torture, and murder. After two immensely elaborate trials, in the first of which the jury issued a death penalty, he is now serving a life sentence, which means 30 years. The reason this creature (and thousands like him) has not been executed is that the Supreme Court has contorted the process surrounding a capital verdict into an insane game that defies every tenet of law, reason, justice, and common sense. The death penalty for drug pushers? Maybe, but first let's return to the good old English common law of capital punishment for murder, rape, arson, treason, and first degree burglary, all crimes that damage the innocent irrevocably. Otherwise where is the logic in employing the death penalty to rescue us from evil profiteers and foreigners who have the effrontery to sell some of our citizens something they want?

I have no objection, in principle, to laws against sin. Even if they are not enforced they are often necessary or useful supports of society, for there certainly does exist an essential something known as public morality, even though a good proportion of Americans are now too much materialists to recognize it. I do not believe that liberty means anybody can do anything. But I am convinced that given the real world that exists now, the healthy and the conservative solution to the drug problem might well be a little laissez-faire. I am aware of the



destructiveness of drugs and of the dangers of decriminalization. But I am also inclined to think that probably our best hope is to try it.

If I am certain of one thing, it is that the political and media fury now underway against drugs will never accomplish anything except to spend money. It is conservative wisdom which tells us that some things will always be with us and may as well be confined within bounds and left alone. It is liberal progressivism that tells us we have to save everyone from himself, whether he wants to be saved or not. Our

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cultural landscape is littered with the wreck and ruin of failed progressivism. Why not try for once getting the federal government and the liberal intellectual class and the pork-barrellers out of the way and allow the healthy forces of state law and community opinion to work?

The removal of the ban of law from drugs would at once undermine the huge profits and thus remove all the impetus and auxiliary criminality from the trade. There is evidence that the end of Prohibition was marked by a decline in the abuse of alcohol. It certainly put a dent in organized crime and cynical scofflawing and the corruption of public officials.

One of the many evils of Prohibition is that it accustomed our society to think of coercion by the federal government as a solution to every problem. The great destructive experiment was ended by turning the matter back to the states, where it should have been all along. Why not try that in our present situation? What have we got to lose? Many states would prohibit most drugs. Others would regulate them closely. Surely all would vigorously prohibit their sale to minors, and with reduced responsibilities they might, in fact, be able to do this job much more effectively than at present. And, of course, all would continue to educate on the evils of drug use, though there is not the least reason to think this does any good where direct personal experience does not work.

The supplies could be regulated, like alcohol, and taxed. We would have to be determined, of course, to punish people who committed crimes while under the influence of drugs, not for taking drugs, but for the crimes they commit. It is just possible that we might achieve an amelioration of the situation as great as can be hoped in an imperfect world. If not, one of the many virtues of states' rights is that it allows for learning and change and adaptation that the federal lummox has never been capable of. Possibly after a while our main "drug problem" will be to prevent the liberals in Congress and the courts from making the habit into an inalienable right and subsidizing it.

Clyde Wilson is professor of history at the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

CONSERVATION

Prometheus in Overalls

by William Mueller

When my fellow Iowan Norman Borlaug started what came to be called the Green Revolution, he had only the best of intentions for farmers. Using chemicals, farmers could be converted into superhuman producers able to supply society with cheap and abundant food. In 1970 Borlaug won the Nobel Prize—a kind of trumpet sounding for the decade when chemical farming truly showed its stuff. But by the 1980's we realized that the Green Revolution was a monster, an Eden severely contaminated with agrichemicals, eroded and barren of wildlife. Massive production also spawned a farm policy that was enormously expensive and infinitely insane.

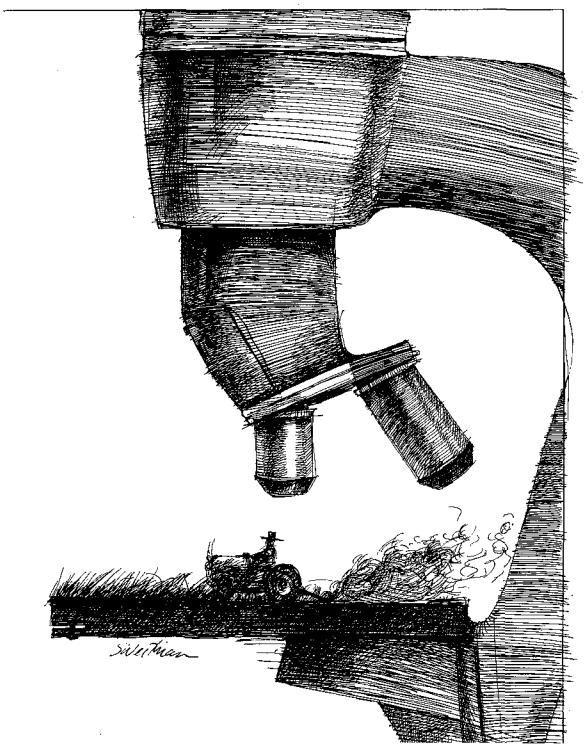
Now comes the biotechnical revolution in farming, which many feel will deliver us from the sins of the agrichemical age. Bioengineering already has or will soon: provide us with inexpensive food indefinitely, lower our dependency on pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, limit erosion by shrinking the amount of land needed for farming, and provide foods that are convenient, nutritious, and infinitely varied.

Sounds too good to be true? There is a fair chance that it is. But first, a little more on the positive potential of agricultural biotechnology. Today, using many techniques borrowed from medical biotechnology, ag researchers are cloning, splicing, enhancing, and creating entire new species. The majority of the work is a variation on traditional breeding programs, borrowing traits from one variety or species and applying that quality to another variety or species which does not have it. The natural ability which allows some plants to retard weeds is being nurtured in crops which today require herbicides. The ability to fix nitrogen in legumes is being grafted to all kinds of crops to make them self-sufficient fertilizer manufacturers. Disease resistance is being built into plants and animals. Climate tolerances are being built in, so that fruits, vegetables, and field crops can be grown in parts of the country or world where it has never been possible to grow them.

Some of these new combinations of genes would take decades or more for traditional breeders to achieve in their labs. Other crosses, where material from different species is used, could never be accomplished without the new methods. It is as if the world's natural processes have been sped up a millionfold and then delivered a bit of totally unexpected English topspin. We are limited only by our audacity and creativity in the lab.

Most publicized have been the experiments to create "super" species: super chickens, super hogs, super cows, giant tomatoes, watermelons the size of the Nagasaki bomb. Certainly it is amusing to think of chickens as big as a Honda walking about; but ag researchers no longer laugh at such ideas. There is a great excitement at isolating traits and perfecting the ability to transfer them to anything one wishes.

Consequently, those scientists who create these plants and animals sometimes lose their perspective on the effects of their creations on the agricultural community. Certainly, little attention has been given to the quality of life of the new organisms they create. Consider that the first bioengineered animal to be patented is a mouse with a built-in cancer that makes it invaluable to medi-



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cal researchers.

Or consider these two examples. A leading researcher at a major Midwestern agricultural college, recruited from the National Institute of Health, where she learned to extract very small bits of genetic material, is today isolating the set of genes in swine which collectively make the animal disease-free, strong, and large. She explained to me that she is creating new things in the lab setting almost daily: new genetic strains, new species, all of them close but not quite what they are after. For the time being her team documents the discoveries and saves them. Her telling remark: *they have outstripped their ability to understand and analyze what they can create.*

Nowhere is that weakness in the system more evident than with the recent release of a synthetic bovine growth hormone. This naturally-occurring material, usually found in small quantities, can be produced in huge quantities by using bio-engineering techniques. When injected into cattle it speeds up the metabolism. Beef cattle reach their market weight in half the time. Dairy cattle find that their milk production can be increased by up to 50 percent. The discovery of synthetic bovine growth hormone came on the scene at precisely the time when we were awash in surplus milk. By allowing it to be commercially produced, the USDA has really destroyed tens of thousands of small dairy farmers who cannot compete with large operations, which will use this product to boost their own production and drive down milk prices—a case of a wonderful creation whose time should not have been allowed to come.

It is this dualism that has many agricultural observers worried: infinite creativity on the one hand, a lack of thorough analysis of the impact on the other. All we know at the moment is that biotechnology could take farming in a number of different directions. In early 1986, the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) published *Technology, Public Policy and the Changing Structure of American Agriculture*, produced with the help of the best and the brightest in the various agricultural fields. It is here, perhaps for the first time, that this concern over farming's future has been voiced. OTA emphasized that agriculture faces many possible futures. Some are very good for all concerned. Others are moderately acceptable, with some trade-offs—usually meaning the dislocation of a significant portion of the farm population. Some of the possible future scenarios are not positive for either farmers or the country.

What is striking in reading the report is the mutability of that future. In other words, things which will be happening five, ten, or 20 years from now may be irrevocably affected by the sequence of events and introductions which take place today.

Most people are aware of the pressure that has been exerted on agrichemical companies to minimize contamination of our groundwater from pesticides and fertilizers, and to restrict the use of pesticides on our foods. For a variety of reasons, the use of pesticides has been declining in the 1980's. At the same time, these giant agrichemical companies have been acquiring over 100 seed corn companies. They have seen the obvious trend and are getting directly involved with the development of crops that move us away from our chemical dependency. So far that sounds good. But be advised that this is not a totally humanitarian gesture.

A 1980 Supreme Court ruling determined that new living organisms (bioengineered) could be patented. Since that decision, thousands of patents have been filed on key genetic material. Many agricultural experts believe that the introduction of super hybrids will push everything else off the market. The gene pool will essentially be held captive, just as in today's dairy industry a very small pool of breeding stock accounts for nearly all of the cows being milked. This gene pool industry in crops will be an estimated $12 billion-a-year business. Not only will it crush competition and put all the seeds into the hands of a few, but it will dictate what kind of crops will be planted and who will get them.

To show how complex this issue is, remember that it is agrichemical companies acquiring the genetic material. Now consider that 28 seed companies (owned by agrichemical companies) are currently working on "herbicide-resistant" crops. That means we take a crop that wilts on exposure to a popular herbicide, and we breed into the crop properties that have allowed other crops to withstand exposure to it. In short, the chemical companies have discovered that it is easier to change the plant to accept an established product than to go through the long and expensive process of developing a new pesticide.

At face value that seems fair and sensible. The problem is that the pesticides to which crops are being made resistant are very suspect compounds indeed. They are old chemicals which came on the market before the EPA developed its most recent testing procedures. In the case of atrazine, one of the most popular pesticides, the EPA has been within an eyelash of banning it altogether, because of a very large body of data that links the pesticide to cancer, and its widespread contamination of groundwater. Of course the new herbicide-resistant varieties, because they are tailored to work with these old compounds, throw a double whammy into the EPA's plans. First, there will be great pressure to allow the continued use of atrazine (and the other pesticides having crops made for them). Second, these compounds will probably get relicensed because of some recent changes in the law, which will extend the life expectancy of the product.

But here we also have one of those divergent paths alluded to earlier. At the present point in the research process, it would be just as easy to perfect weed-resistant crops as herbicide-resistant ones. The difference is obvious. A weed-resistant plant does not need to be sprayed with pesticide. Thus it reduces the farmer's need for pesticide. So progress is not being made for farmers. It is being made for the agrichemical companies. It is predicted that when these herbicide-resistant plant varieties hit the market, it will quickly reduce the number of chemical companies now making pesticides from about 50 to three to five. It will also mean that agri-giants control all inputs: seed to be planted, chemicals to be applied, expertise to show how to farm it. If Frank Norris were still writing, he would have a perfect sequel to his *The Octopus*.

Which brings us to the fate of the farmer. That OTA report also predicts that by the year 2000 we will have lost over one million of the 2.1 million

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farmers we now have. Most of the loss will be due to innovations in technology which keep market prices very low and so drive out less efficient, i.e., conventional farmers. Theoretically, the introduction of almost any new biotechnological innovation should be able to be adapted by anyone. But the OTA concluded that for a variety of reasons, it will be the large farmers who are in a position to make the changes and benefit from them—particularly at that critical early period in any innovation's lifespan when great profits are made because the market prices have not adjusted. Smaller farmers will change, but it will be in response to the flooding of the market with cheaper foods created by the new technology. Most of these smaller farmers will be too late in making the change, and they will be forced out of business. Each wave of change in farming has followed this same pattern.

This might lead to another social crisis in farming similar to what we have just gone through (thanks to increases in farm costs against declining values for land). The OTA considered several choices which are available to us, if we hold constant that biotechnology is inevitable and we have to work around it. The most obvious scenario is that the government gets out of the farm subsidy business—as it is now trying to do. With cheap and abundant supplies of food, mostly coming from about 50,000 large farms, the country will continue to be fed. Meanwhile, a great weeding out of small and medium-sized farmers will take place.

OTA did consider the economic cost to America if for some reason we wanted to "save the family farm," as we have been trying to do. For this it would be necessary to create a two-tier system, in which farmers who did not use technology were subsidized as they now are. The other farmers would not be subsidized. This kind of system does not seem very likely or very popular. No one would be happy with it. The costs could be staggering—far more than the $30 billion in farm subsidies which we have seen in recent years.

A third possibility is that those who do not utilize technology will stay on the acres as hobbyists, possibly growing alternative crops and selling direct—in effect, avoiding the main food chain. There is nothing wrong with this. But it certainly changes the role of farming.

Ultimately, what is at issue here is a question of direction. The federal agencies have only danced around the issue of regulation of biotechnology in agriculture. Remember that in the health science area we have excellent checks and balances, reviews of procedures, rules and regulations, and clear designation as to who is overseeing biotechnological research. In the agricultural field, where the experiments are infinitely larger and potentially more dangerous, we have almost no such control.

These days, it would seem, Prometheus wears overalls. We should not make the mistake of judging the man by his attire. The new bionic farmer ain't exactly American Gothic.

William Mueller lives on a farm in Iowa.

SCIENCE

Darwin for Sissies, or What Ever Happened to Survival of the Fittest?

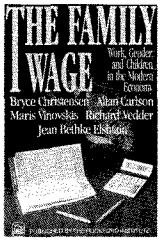
by Mark D. Rentz

Evolutionists used to be hard-boiled theorists who maintained that nature, including man, was based only on the impersonal plus time plus chance. They coolly asserted that the fittest survive, that some species die off and others thrive because of natural selection. All enduring creatures, great and small, have mutated and adapted to their environments.

The new breed of evolutionist is just as firm on these "orthodox" positions, but insists on blatantly interfering in nature. They justify their propping up endangered species who can't cut the mustard by citing a natural transcendence—something that sounds very similar to the Christian transcendence they have despised so much in the Christian "myth." Face it: the new evolutionist is a blubbering sentimentalist.

Tune in to just about any animal program and you can see: a *National Geographic* wildlife special, *Nature, Animal Kingdom, NOVA*, a documentary on Jane Goodall at the Gombe Stream chimpanzee reserve in Tanzania, or just about any post-Tarzan era animal flick will do. Hear how over millions of years these endangered animals have evolved, and that we mustn't let them simply die out in an epochal fortnight. Hear how man's conquest of nature is an immoral act. Watch noble and enlightened conservationists on a romantic rescue effort to save pandas, elephants, blue whales, snail darters, Bengal tigers, rhinos, baby seals—saving everything but the human fetus (people needn't apply for protection because they are, after all, doing all the environmental damage, and there are too many of them anyway).

These weak-kneed evolutionists, apparently in need of a cosmological crutch, have discovered pantheism. They've replaced monotheism and the "antiquated" creation model with a romanticized nature. Speciesists, they



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project human feelings and thoughts onto nature. Cynthia Moss has lived with elephants since 1972, and has written the recently published *Elephant Memories: Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family*. Moss offers revealing insights like, "Elephants are experiencing joy," and, elsewhere, the elephant "mostly dreamed, perhaps of vast swards of sweet new grass and clear, cool hill streams." She believes that elephants may have intimations of mortality. Even the reviewer at *Newsweek*, her former employer, confesses that elephant mysteries "sometimes entice Moss into an anthropomorphic twilight zone."

Moss (isn't that a great name for a conservationist?) is wholly sentimental. Touchy-feely evolutionists like her deduce thusly: since humans are only animals, animals easily attain human status. Albert Schweitzer, the famed Alsatian theologian, musician, and medical missionary, developed a system of ethics called "reverence for life" which required a profound respect for the lives of all other beings. One of Schweitzer's co-workers observed that the more reverence he had for "life," the less he cherished people. The tsetse fly buzzing into Schweitzer's African hospital and threatening the life of a recuperating patient has just as much right to live as the human.

When we hear evolutionists talking about morality, it is, shall we say, "a leap of science." Does the impersonal plus time plus chance evolve into right and wrong? Is swatting a tsetse fly or clubbing a baby seal really murder? Evolutionists cannot grin and nod in agreement with Ogden Nash: "God made the fly and then forgot to tell us why." They must conclude: "Chance made the earth, so it has no inherent worth." If poachers slaughtered all the remaining elephants for their ivory, the serious evolutionist would be forced to admit, after his immediate emotional reaction, that under the rule of survival of the fittest his tears are irrational.

The sentimental evolutionist, however, justifies his mourning by preaching about the "chain of life." If the California condor dies out, he reasons, the ecological balance, you know, the ecosystems, will get screwed up. We won't survive if nature doesn't survive. The condor is a part of nature, a part of the whole, a part of us. We must save it to save ourselves.

Doctor Doolittle is in need of a refresher course in elementary evolution. We will survive without the condor because we can adapt. That's the evolutionary challenge. And who needs the condor anyway? Remember the Cambrian disasters? Some "500 million" years ago the trilobites disappeared from the sea and the world didn't end in a whimper! *Time* called the Permian cataclysm of "248 million" years ago "the biggest of extinctions"; up to 90 percent of all marine life died. Nobody knew they were even gone until this century. The late-Cretaceous event of "65 million" years ago finished off the dinosaurs and many groups of species. The evolutionary process includes incredible destruction and waste, but, says hard-liner physicist Richard Muller from the University of California at Berkeley, "in wiping the slate clean, these catastrophes opened up ecological niches and prevented stagnation."

Some species can adapt, some can't. Tough luck. That's natural selection. The California condor is butt ugly, feeds on carrion, has a cue ball head atop a Modigliani neck, and vomits whenever it is mildly frightened. This is one bird that is clearly a result of the impersonal plus time plus chance. Why get choked up about its demise? Why work for 61 and a half hours with a pair of tweezers to aid the baby condor out of its shell, into an incubator, and out of the endangered species column? Its time is up. Better luck in the next Big Bang! The universe is going to collapse on itself eventually anyway, and the sun will burn out sooner or later. Have a nice day, that's the important thing. Nature knows what it is doing. Don't be a busybody.

One group of environmental meddlers recently received a sentimental ovation from *Life*. The George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center near Bartlesville, Oklahoma has been responsible for hatching 99 Southern bald eagles. "We'll be running an eagle factory here," says Director Steve Sherrod. Cost: $500,000 a year. These benevolent birdbrains have devoted their lives to building up the numbers of this waning species and for half a year they perform the basic function of eagle parents.

"People ask me why we are doing this," says Sherrod. "It's simple. We consider eagles as works of art that can never be replaced. It's like someone slashing a Rembrandt. Once the birds are gone, they're gone. Then it will be too late."

The Rembrandt analogy is the old watch and watchmaker trap. Evolutionists need to beware of design/designer reasoning. Obviously these sentimental conservationists have been subverted by creationists. Each Rembrandt painting, remember, was made or "created" (if you must) by a painter, for a purpose, with pleasure, *ex nilo*, in the likeness and image, to some extent, of the painter. (In some of Rembrandt's paintings he even painted himself, incarnate, into the story.)

If you are a hard-line evolutionist, the eagle was not made. It evolved out of chemical reactions by chance. It has no *raison d'être*, and no inherent beauty or purpose. If the golden eagle can soar for long periods searching for a prey and can spot a hare from a distance of 6,560 feet, it is not a timeless treasure or a work of art. It is merely an empirical fact. If the eagle species perishes, this, too, is as plain a fact as the nose in the middle of your face. We are, aren't we? all brute facts of no intrinsic aesthetic worth.

The evolutionist who believes nature, and man, is purposeful, moral, inherently beautiful, and important will find himself at odds with every jot and tittle of evolutionary theory. The evolutionist who holds out for intrinsic beauty, truth, purpose, and compassion, even though his theory has prescribed moral relativity, blind chance, and savage instincts, is like an atheist who, although he doesn't believe in the existence of God, goes to church "religiously" and does "Christian" things because it makes him feel good. It may look nice, it may feel nice, but his behavior is inconsistent. The poor fellow is unable to live as he believes, or can't truly believe as he lives. In the same fashion, the compassionate or sentimental evolutionist is nothing more than a scientific oxymoron.

So why should an evolutionist save condors, elephants, and eagles? After all, is he his brother's zoo keeper?

Mark D. Rentz teaches English at Arizona State University and has written for Newsweek.

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ART

Picture This

by Russell Desmond

James Van Der Zee

Since Sir Philip Sidney converted the poet from a useful reteller of the truth to a maker of creations ("he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth"), the world has starved for the stuff of allegory. The malady, in our time, has infected all of the arts. One hundred years of modern architecture's assaults on tradition have failed to come up with a suitable replacement for the Classical colonnade as a facade for courthouse buildings, for the simple reason that there is no better way to convey authority than by referring to tradition.

New Orleanians were treated in April and May to a rather adept display of traditional allegory in an exhibition of some vintage photographs by James Van Der Zee at Lori Yarotsky's new Res Nova Gallery. Van Der Zee, best known through his association with the Harlem Renaissance, was an inventive craftsman who used everything from *trompe l'oeil* props and multiple negatives to smeared vaseline, silver glitter, and cotton to achieve his visionary portraits. What is reassuring about a revival of interest in his work is that he put all of his inventiveness towards conveying very traditional themes, rather than towards the pursuit of "self-expression," obscurantism, or a "personal mythology." There is constant reference to the way eternal values and the concerns of the spirit hover just above our mundane lives. An old soldier dreams of the glory of battle; two friends share reminiscences of their fathers; an angel frees the soul of a prematurely deceased young boy in his coffin; a barefoot preacher trembles to contain the fire and brimstone of his inspiration. Many might find Van Der Zee's work rewarding because of his modern techniques, or for the particulars of his presentation of black daily life in a certain time and place; I thought what was best about it was the part that was old-fashioned, and universal.

Russell Desmond lives in New Orleans.

photo credit Owen Murphy

Memories of a Home, 1930.

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On 'Letter From Canada'

The August issue carried a "Letter From Canada" by Jigs Gardner, an American writer living in Nova Scotia. His analysis reminds me of what you would get if you sent a comparably bumptious and ignorant young Canadian to Louisiana or Mississippi, from which he reported back that the fashionable left-liberalism of New York or Los Angeles could all be explained as the malign influence of New England puritanism. To write, "there are areas, as where I live, where the unemployment rate is 40-50 percent" is deceptive, since the entire population of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island is *less than 5 percent* of the population of Canada, and the Maritimes have been chronically depressed since the world gave up sailing ships for steam. The Canadian economy is far from being, as Gardner claims, "in a bad way"; it has been, in *The Economist*'s words, one of the most successful economies of the modern Western industrial world.

I agree with him that the Canadian system of unemployment benefits undermines incentive and encourages permanent dependency in some people. But again, because of his location in Nova Scotia, he vastly exaggerates the importance of this problem to the country as a whole. The Canadian unemployment rate has generally been a couple of points above the US level in the Reagan years, but has been lower than much of Western Europe's (never mind the rest of the world). I believe that Americans *are*, overall,

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more entrepreneurial and adventurous than Canadians, but most Canadians work just as hard as the Americans. To say that the US would acquire "millions of welfare bums" if Canada ever joined the US is preposterous.

Similarly, nearly all Gardner's impressions about Canadian culture are mostly sour grousings of an intellectual living in a jerkwater town. Take this: "Within the educated middle class, only one opinion is ever publicly expressed: 60'sism, the advocacy of anarchism at home and Communism abroad." The most lively magazine of ideas in the country, *The Idler*, is culturally and politically conservative, and is run by young men with views much like those generally found in *Chronicles*. The best-known Canadian magazine, *Saturday Night*, which corresponds roughly to *Harper's*, turned conservative a couple of years ago and is now owned by the politically conservative Canadian media tycoon, Conrad Black. The main business newspaper of the country, and in many respects the best newspaper overall, is *The Financial Post*, whose editorialists and columnists hold much the same opinions as their equivalents at *The Wall Street Journal*. The most popular and financially successful newspaper in Toronto is the *Sun*, a right-wing populist tabloid, one of whose journalists was killed in Nicaragua by the Sandinistas. Canada does indeed have "a few thousand *New Yorker* readers," but it also has a few thousand who read *Commentary*, *National Review*, and *The American Spectator*—and who are beginning to notice *Chronicles*.

Does this mean that Gardner's impression of a country entirely under the control of the trendy hive is entirely mistaken? No. Everything he says about the malignant effect of the state-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the brainless officiousness of much of the political elite, the virulent anti-Americanism that is propagated by expatriate and noisy American lefties, is quite accurate. And while some of these nuisances have their counterpart in the US and Great Britain, I will readily admit that they are worse here, for historical reasons.

But Gardner gets this wrong as well. He attaches a wildly disproportionate importance to Loyalist arrivals from the American Revolution (again, probably because their descendants make up more of the base population of Nova Scotia than of other regions of Canada—even Ontario and Quebec, the other areas of Loyalist settlement). Furthermore, while some Loyalists were indeed genteel and snobbish, most were just hardworking farmers, and some were highly capable capitalist entrepreneurs who helped launch the economic development of Canada in the 19th century. To suggest that Loyalist snobbery and superiority "may explain why it took so long to settle the country" is just plain foolish.

The slow and erratic settlement of Canada can be attributed mostly to climate and geography. Without the Canadian agricultural scientists who developed wheat that could be grown upon thin topsoil, with little water and in short growing seasons, without the toughness and determination of immigrant groups such as the Scots and Ukrainians, the Canadian West would not be *thinly* settled; it would be as empty as most of the Canadian North (and Alaska, for that matter). Ontario, on the other hand, has ten million people with a per capita income *higher* than the general US per capita income (though not as high as that of states like California). The general population growth of Canada has also been slowed by the circumstance that it only really began after the Loyalists came. When the British conquered New France, the entire Canadian population—French Canadian, Maritime, British military, and Loyalist put together—was less than *one-twentieth* that of the American colonies. The US was not only a far greater magnet for immigrants, it drew people from Canada as well. Only the gradual "filling up" of the US allowed Canada to start attracting heavy immigration.

Gardner is correct in arguing that Canada began in an act of negation of the American Revolution. Unfortunately, like most American conservatives, he finds it hard to realize that this negation was the central act of conservative affirmation in the history of North America. "Better one tyrant three thousand miles away than three thousand tyrants one mile away," was how a Loyalist who lost his farm by opposing the Revolution explained his choice. What kept alive this tradition of skeptical royalism and dislike of populist enthusiasm was not Gardner's mythical "pattern of a genteel upper class and an unwashed lower class rabble"—Canada's actual class structure is not much different from that of the US—but the cautious and compromising politics required to hold French-speaking Catholics and (largely) Protestant English-speakers together in one nation.

One of the reasons that Gardner does not understand Canada has nothing to do with this country at all. Like many Americans who now identify themselves as conservatives, he has forgotten, or never learned, that even in the United States conservatism has been skeptical or hostile to free enterprise and its confident but somewhat philistine expansionism. As we have come to realize, however, that not just Marxism, but the more piecemeal statist expansion of both Fabianism and the paternalist right are deadly threats to both freedom and order, we are all coming more and more to agree with Friedrich von Hayek. (This is a recent and somewhat reluctant conversion.) To put it in more historical terms, the hero of literate Canadian conservatives has been Dr. Johnson, not Adam Smith. We understand perfectly well that *The Wealth of Nations* provides a far better formula for social dynamism than the perennial wisdom in Boswell's biography. But *we are the people who did not hold dynamism as the highest good.*

This is what is most ironic about Gardner's little exercise in packaged history. It is an attack on Canadian provincialism and parochialism by an essentially provincial and parochial critic. I dislike the ideology and the hegemony of the hive just as much as he does, and I would guess the proportion of Canadians across the country with views similar to my own is about the same as in the United States. Many of us wish we had a Margaret Thatcher, rather than a Brian Mulroney, in charge of the Conservative Party and the country. But the fact we do not has nothing to do with us being a nation of cowed louts, demoralized by Loyalist gentility. It has to do with a perfectly reasonable desire to avoid playing out a northern version of the American Civil War, with Quebec corresponding to the South.

If Gardner wrote his essay as a

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spoof, deliberately intended to provoke a response of this kind, then I must congratulate him. Conservatism, as the term has long been used by writers like Russell Kirk, has characterized Canadian society for a long time. But conservatism as the term would be defined by William F. Buckley Jr., or even Norman Podhoretz, is at about the same stage in Canada now as it was in the United States ten or 20 years ago. American readers are entitled to smile at our backwardness, but not to sneer at our vacuity. It's not that we don't do any thinking up here; we're just less anxious to rush into print when we may be guilty of producing nothing but claptrap.

—Neil Cameron, Director
The Saint Lawrence Institute
Montreal, Quebec

On 'Getting It Right'

John Judis is entitled to believe what he wants about our book; however, a number of statements in his review (*Chronicles*, November 1988) deserve to be challenged.

Contrary to assertions by him and by Dan Himmelfarb in *Commentary*, neither Thomas Fleming nor I is an antimodernist European conservative. We present our arguments as social historians—i.e., methodological modernists. We point to the disintegration of an authentic American right, as admirers of the traditional American concepts of community and freedom. Dr. Fleming is a self-described Southern Agrarian Democrat; whereas I, if I had the opportunity, would campaign for Robert Taft for President of the United States. Our unwillingness to see the conservative movement as properly culminating in the rhetoric and programs of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sidney Hook may cause offense in some quarters. Nonetheless, it does not justify the attempt to treat our presentation of American conservatism as either antimodern or non-American.

I am troubled by Judis's insistence that the Old Right does not constitute a genuine social movement because of its political ineffectiveness. The point we make is that current social movements *must* remain politically ineffective, unless they have access to ample funds and are well-connected to the New York-Washington journalistic axis. The Old Right has failed to gain ground because it lacks the prerequisites for power mentioned above. Neoconservatives, by contrast, have taken over conservative politics and have shaped the Reagan presidency ideologically, without having either an electoral base or intellectual depth, because they have shrewdly exploited other prerequisites for rule.

Though Judis is right to point to the difference between political elites and political masses, I reject his simplistic identification of conservative constituencies with racist politics. Conservative voters may not understand the historical speculation of Eric Voegelin, or the geopolitical musings of James Burnham, but what unites them to conservative intellectuals are shared sentiments and a shared perception of reality. Conservative thinkers and conservative voters oppose the modern managerial state while valuing community, social deference, and ordered liberty. Like everyone else, conservative intellectuals and conservative voters prefer living in safe neighborhoods to those now found in our inner cities. Unlike certified liberals, the rest of us do not consider the demand for law and order a code word for racism.

Judis accuses us of a general ignorance of American populists, even to the point of suggesting we did not know the party affiliation of George Wallace. In one of six references to the Alabama governor, an editing error resulted in the inclusion of his name in a list of Republicans. He is elsewhere identified explicitly as a Democrat, even in the index, which Judis has not bothered to check. I wish it could be said that such negligence were not typical of his review and of much else he has written on the conservative movement.

Pace John Judis, nowhere do we suggest that the Old Right supports American military intervention on behalf of European imperialists. What we do assert is that American traditionalists feel a deep cultural affinity for European civilization. Thus, when they see beleaguered Europeans locked in a struggle with Third World peoples and governments, they side instinctively with their fellow Westerners—unlike the left, which sides mechanically with anti-Westerners.

We never call for restricting the franchise, though there is no reason to assume that racism is the only ground on which one can favor limiting the vote. In the past voting was limited on the basis of property or social class, but only rarely as a result of race.

This brings me to the heart of my criticism of John Judis's review: the continuing innuendos, culminating in an explicit assertion, that the authors are racists. There is no evidence in the book that either one of us is racist, unless racist is defined in a contemporary partisan sense to mean balking at the demands of professional victimologists. Indeed, Tom Fleming has devoted years of research to demonstrating the cross-cultural character of social morality. Judging by his writings, it seems that Fleming has kinder things to say about African tribes than about white American liberals. Moreover, both of us, unlike John Judis, believe that *all* of mankind is formed in the image of God.

—Paul Gottfried, Senior Editor
The World & I
Washington, DC

U.S. Postal Service
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685

1A. TITLE OF PUBLICATION	1B. PUBLICATION NO.	2. DATE OF FILING
Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture	7 3 7 - 8 5 0	9/15/88
3. FREQUENCY OF ISSUE	3A. NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY	3B. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE
Monthly	12	$21.00

4. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION (*Street, City, County, State and ZIP+4 Code*) (*Not printers*)
The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main St., Winnebago, Rockford, IL 61103-7061

5. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHER (*Not printers*)
The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main St., Rockford, IL 61103-7061

6. FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR (*This item MUST NOT be blank*)

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EDITOR (*Name and Complete Mailing Address*)
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